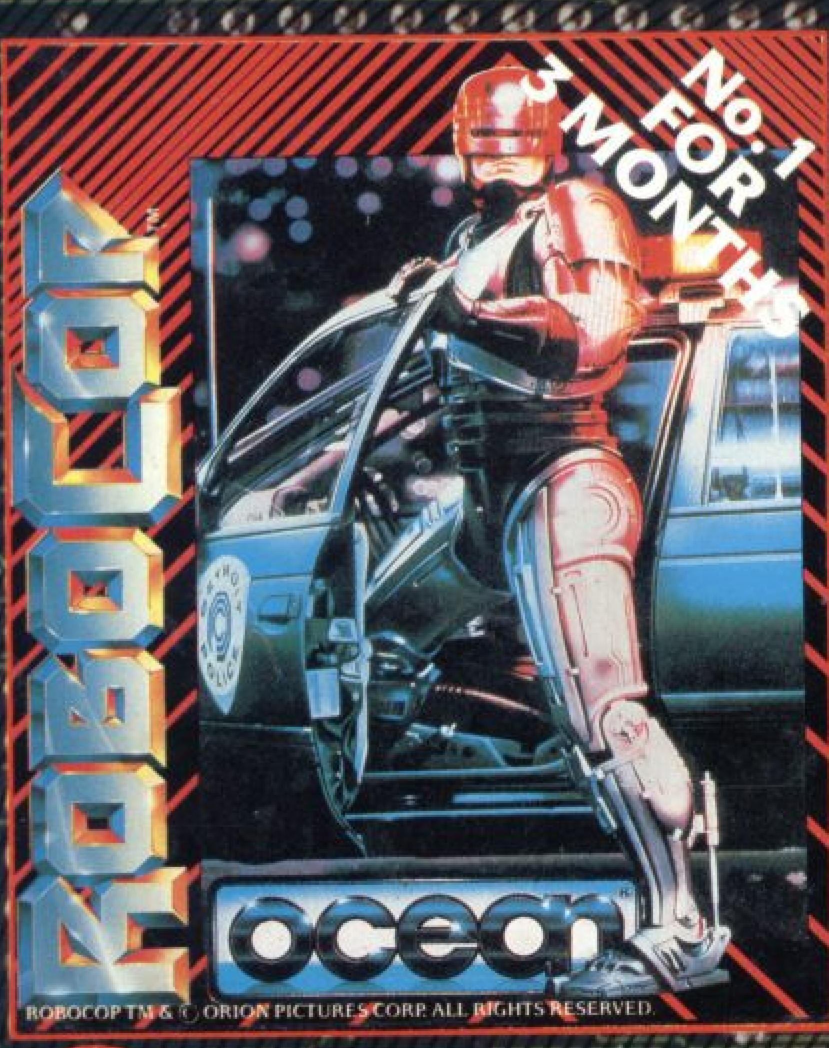


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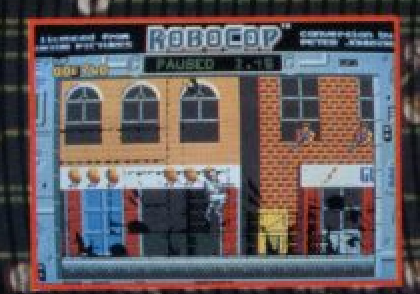


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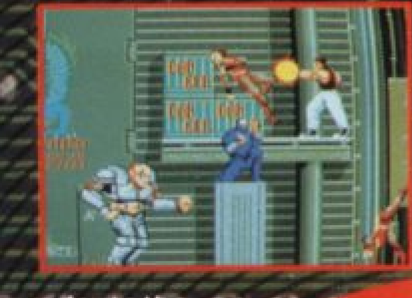
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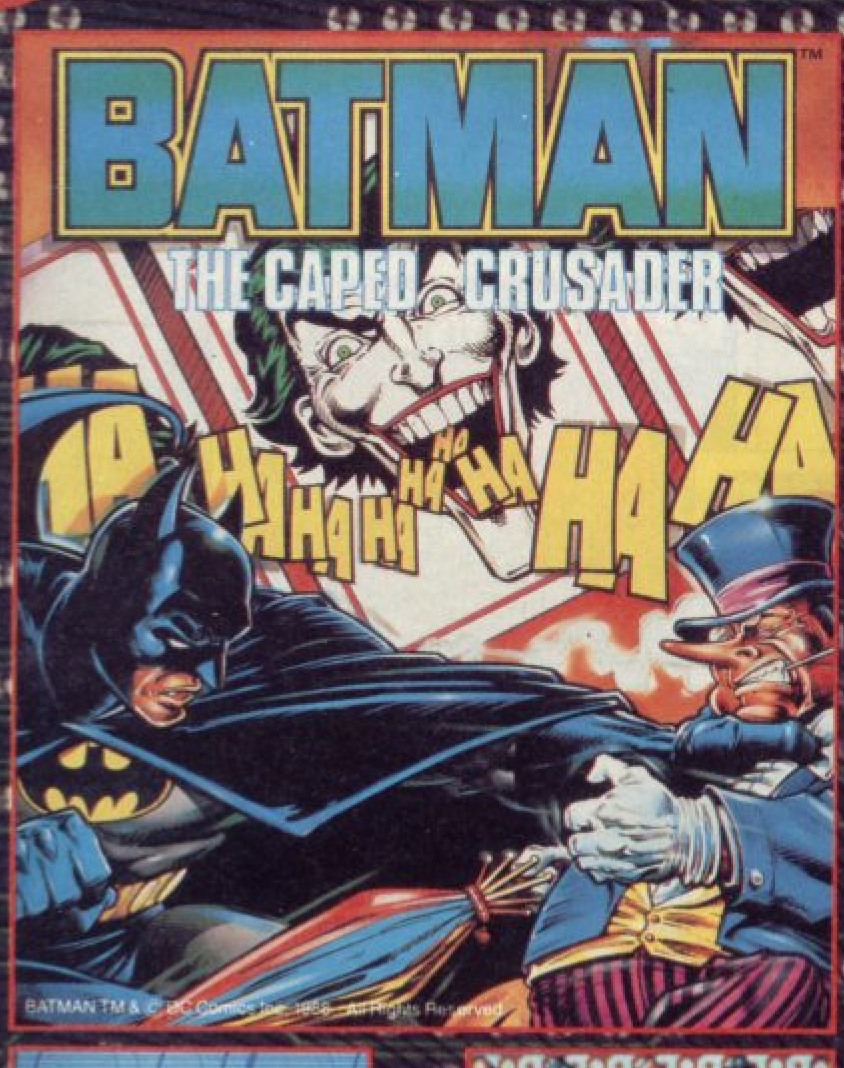
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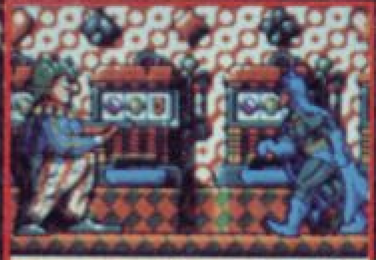


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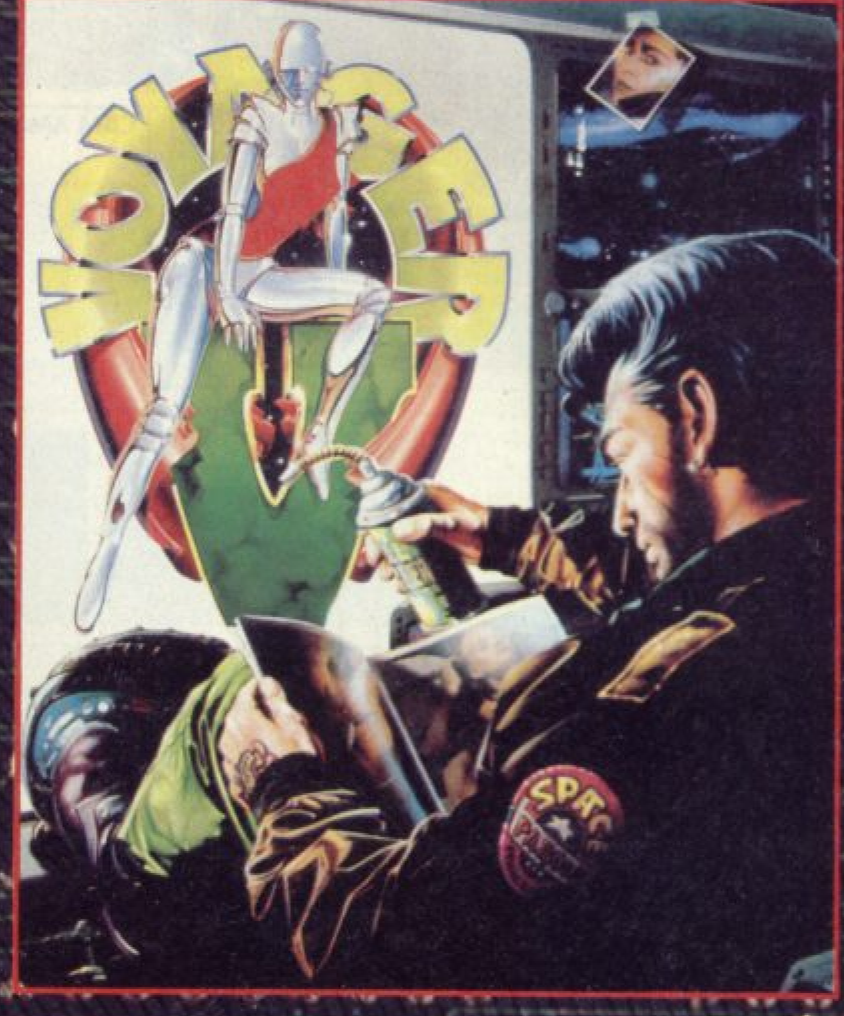






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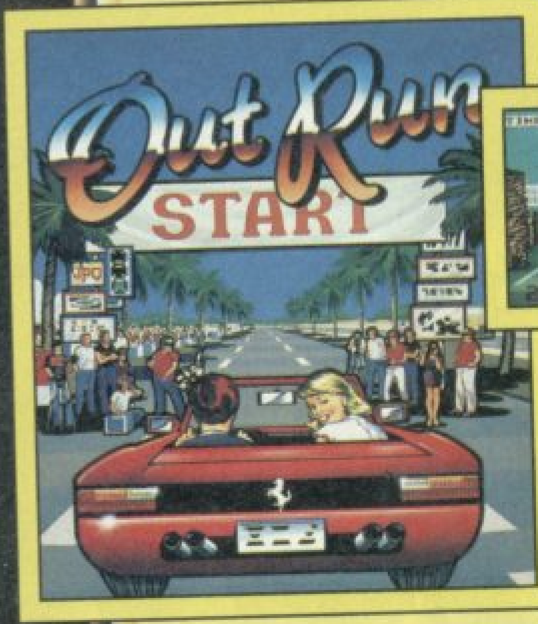
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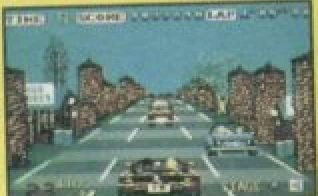
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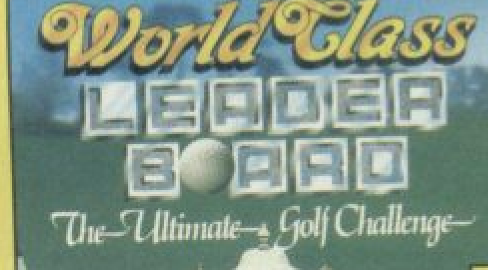
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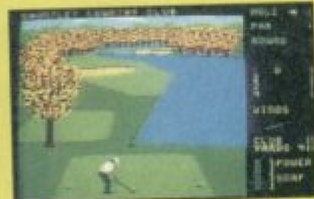


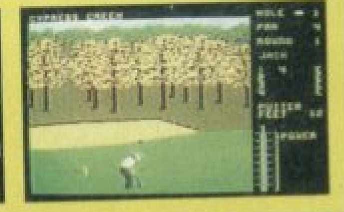
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Screen shots from various systems.

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The Games machine

IN THIS ISSUE...

REGULARS

FEATURES

BACKING UP THE BYTES

Computers are fun, even when you're being serious, which must explain the success of the TGM Back Bytes section. Today's 16-bit computer owner is an enthusiast who expects rather more from his machine and its software and hardware back up than games — though they evidently remain an important facet of leisure time.

That's why in the next few months you can expect to see Back Bytes extending its coverage further. Even now, in a quiet, secluded place, we're setting up the TGM User Labs UK, a hi-tech testbench hotbed of enthusiasts in the fields of music, graphics generation, art manipulation, animation and electronic publication. They'll be putting equipment and applications through rigorous testing to find out what can and what can't be done with a computer at home. In future you won't be able to live without it.

On a similar subject, last month we promised to tell you about the way the Apple Macintosh is revolutionising publishing — and how it helps TGM — but for one we ran out of space(!), and for another we decided to roll the article into one of Back Byte's first TGM User Labs UK features, so you'll have to hang on a few weeks more for that one.

Meanwhile, enjoy this month's cutting edge — TGM!

WIN!

A PROGRAMMABLE VIDEO RECORDER
Plus Hewson's latest blockbuster *Astaroth* and copies of the book that inspired the game, *Carrie*, by Stephen King
See page 56

A TOP OF THE RANGE MODEL PORSCHE
Accolade celebrate *The Duel — Test Drive II* with this great prize worth hundreds of pounds
See page 58

A MAJOR GRAPHIC ART COMPETITION
Can you match the terrific artwork we've seen on the likes of *Ballistix* and *Blood Money*? Well, Psygnosis have laid down the gauntlet. The challenge is on to find the best computer artist on the 16-bits... the prizes are incalculable!
See page 64

AND...0898

Check out page 74 to see what we've got for you this month on the TGM Hotline! Nothing fancy, nothing special, just incredible! Yours for a phonecall...
Are you the lucky one this month? You could be...



Spherical

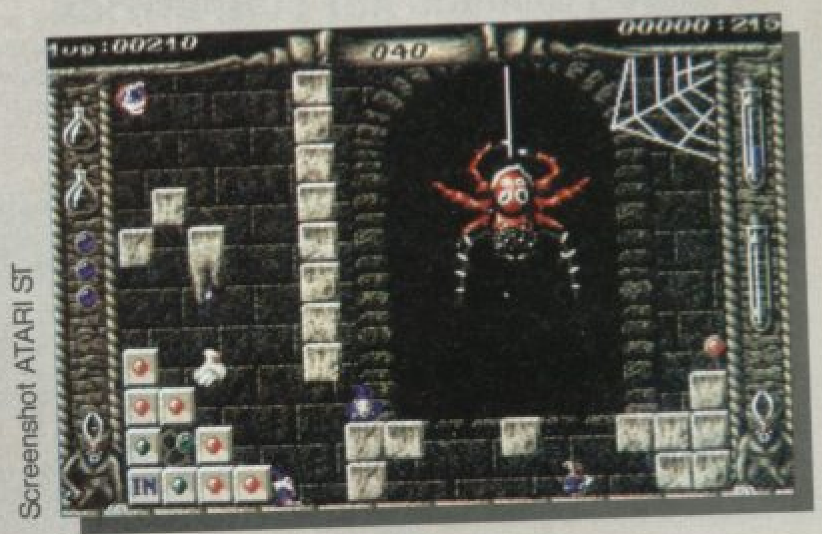




Screenshot ATARI ST



Screenshot ATARI ST



Screenshot ATARI ST

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The editor of POWER PLAY awarded Spherical 84 points and classification "Highly Recommended".





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TGM REPORT

The Game Boy is here!

Exclusive by Shintaro Kanoya

While we wait with bated breath for Nintendo's 16-bit console, the Japanese giants have been kind enough to give us a little something to occupy ourselves with. Remember those Game & Watches gadgets? Well now prepare yourself for the Game Boy which will similarly drive you mad.

The Game Boy is best described as a portable console, rather than a souped-up G&W. The main distinction between the Game Boy and its primitive predecessors is its ability to take cartridges, and therefore not be limited to just one game. The other difference is the power. Inside this 90mm x 148mm box is housed one 8-bit customised CPU and two 64K static RAM chips.

In the more instantly obvious visual and aural departments, the Game Boy is equipped with a green dot-matrix screen, which enables it to handle movement easily without forfeiting the actual graphics. The Game Boy also features some amazing stereo sound (through headphones, although there is a built-in speaker) which adds a new dimension to whatever game you're playing. The control method is still the rocker switch with two independent fire buttons, as well as Start and Select buttons.

The games currently available include *Super Marioland*, *Baseball*, *Mahjong*, and *Alleyway*, a break-out clone. But the most promising, or at least innovative, is *Tennis*. This brings the Game Boy into its own for versatility. With a short lead, two machines can be linked together, and because there's two screens each player's Game Boy displays each half of the court with the player at the bottom (much fairer all round). RPGs look set to follow (honest!), as well as *Tetris* and *Shanghai*.

As always, the questions are how much and when. It currently retails in Japan for around £55 but how much it will be when, and if, it comes to Britain, is anybody's guess. But needing nothing except a translation of the instructions, we might even see it by Nintendo's predicted foreign release date of this summer, although the USA will be its first target. With products like this, and the 16-bit still to come, it seems like Nintendo may still be the final winner of the console war.

Gremlin go back to their roots

By the time you read this, Gremlin (producers of the astounding *FOFT*) will have broken all official links with US Gold management, or so their boss Ian Stewart hopes.

During 1988 Gremlin Graphics had a tough year. Programmers left, after complaining about the move to US Gold's base in Birmingham from their programming offices in Sheffield; profits were slashed as they failed to react quickly to the rapidly switching 8-/16-bit market; and allegiances were broken as budget producers harpooned their lucrative and loyal youth market.

1989, however, saw the emergence of a newer and cleaner Gremlin. The games, when they finally appeared, became more suited to the 16-bit market. Sadly, though, due to the delayed release of *Federation Of Free Traders* and the resulting bad reviews of the ST version (TGM017), doubt was yet again cast upon the company; that had by now moved from US Gold's HQ to other premises in Birmingham.

Happily, Gremlin have learned from their mistakes (see the glowing Amiga review of *FOFT* in this issue). *Super Scramble Simulator* has been well received by critics, and shows Gremlin's positive move to fight back into the 8-bit market.

Born free: Ian Stewart



Ever since a majority share in the company was bought by US Gold directors, Anne and Geoff Brown, Stewart has been concerned that the association might appear as if Gremlin were under another US Gold arm. But outsiders feel that this is just what has happened to the company.

Stewart's attempt to break away will allow him total control, and hopefully take it back to the former glory that Stewart himself fashioned. Gremlin are even going so far as to move back to Sheffield there original home. 'With magwai comes great responsibility...' (*Gremlins*, 1984.)

RoboCop makes record

RoboCop has broken all records in staying at number one in the Gallup sales chart longer than any other title. Ocean's popular film tie-in has mantained its premiere position since it knocked Ocean's previous hit, *Operation Wolf*, off the top spot in January of this year. A proud Gary Bracey, Ocean's enthusiastic spokesman, commented: 'We knew *RoboCop* was a great game, and we're glad that the most respected software chart has reflected our opinion.'



SAM phones home

If you can't wait for the latest news of the SAM Coupe as it appears in TGM, then try ringing Miles Gordon Technology's SAM Hotline on (0792) 791275. The recorded message is updated every week and comes direct from its designer, Bruce Gordon



Gordon: on the hotline daily

Amstrad see the light

Just when you thought it was safe to dismiss the Spectrum, Amstrad announce a brand spanking new Spectrum bundle. The Action Pack contains a new Spectrum peripheral from Amstrad entitled the Magnum lightgun. The Action Pack will also contain a joystick and six games specifically written for the lightgun (including Ocean's *Operation Wolf*). However, these packs are scarce at the moment. You can pick up a +2 version for £149 and the disk-based +3 Action Pack at £199. Expect the solitary Spectrums to drop in price accordingly.

■ On the same note, Cheetah have announced plans of acomplementary, low-cost lightgun for the Spectrum. The Defender, as it is to be called, was originally planned for September, but due to Amstrad's anouncement of their lightgun Cheetah felt it was wiser to bring its release forward to June.



You got the look
Imageworks' latest acquisition is the experienced programming duo, Anthony Taglione and Pete James. Both have an established track record and join forces to produce the latest in roleplaying experiences, *Bloodwych*. This is Tony's and Pete's first 16-bit project, and from all accounts it seems well worth the label of Imageworks.
Bloodwych will be available in July on the ST and Amiga, with 8-bit versions to follow.

FREE RECORDS!!

There we were, sitting quietly in the TGM offices, when who should walk in but the Group Publisher. Geoff was so pleased with being invited to MicroProse's recent MicroStatus/MicroStyle launch after which MicroProse were inviting members of the press to the premiere of Beaches, that he immediately got on to his old friends at Atlantic Records to try to obtain a copy of the soundtrack.

Atlantic Records were so impressed by Geoff's enthusiasm for Ms Midler (star of Beaches) that they sent him 25 copies of the Bette Midler soundtrack.

Geoff's had a good listen to them all, and informs TGM that 'the music's hip so don't you miss it!'. If you fancy a copy of Bette Midler's Beaches soundtrack just write off, with your name and address, to: Beaches Comp, TGM, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.

The first 25 entrants picked out of the bag on July 20 will each receive a copy of the LP. Can't be much simpler than that, can it!

Branson gets Sega



Virgin boss, entrepreneur Richard Branson, recently signed an agreement with Sega Enterprises President, Hayao Nakayama, for a five year distribution deal worth more than £100 million. The deal covers the London-based firm's distribution in Europe of more than one million units of the Sega Master System and 16-bit Mega Drive and seven million units of software over the next five years.

Virgin Mastertronic have spent a hard year promoting the Master System, and confirmation that VM will now be handling the Mega Drive and its software must come as a relief to managing director, Nick Alexander.

The postman always rings twice: First announced in late 1988, Alternative's Postman Pat is now set for release in July. The game — on all formats — features two separate versions: simple and difficult, with extra-special features on the ST and Amiga. 16-bit versions include Pat's own style of games like Snap, Snakes and Ladders, and Ludo. Thank you for your attention, children. Now who wants a sweetie, then?

Computers or sex?

A nationwide survey recently conducted on behalf of Mandarin Software revealed that company execs prefer a quick game on their PC to a few bevvies with the lads or even to sex!

500 company executives were asked to reveal their favourite way of relieving stress during a normal working day. 202 said they played computer games to relax, 197 opted for a quick drink when the going got tough, and just three revealed they favoured sex when things were getting hard at the office!

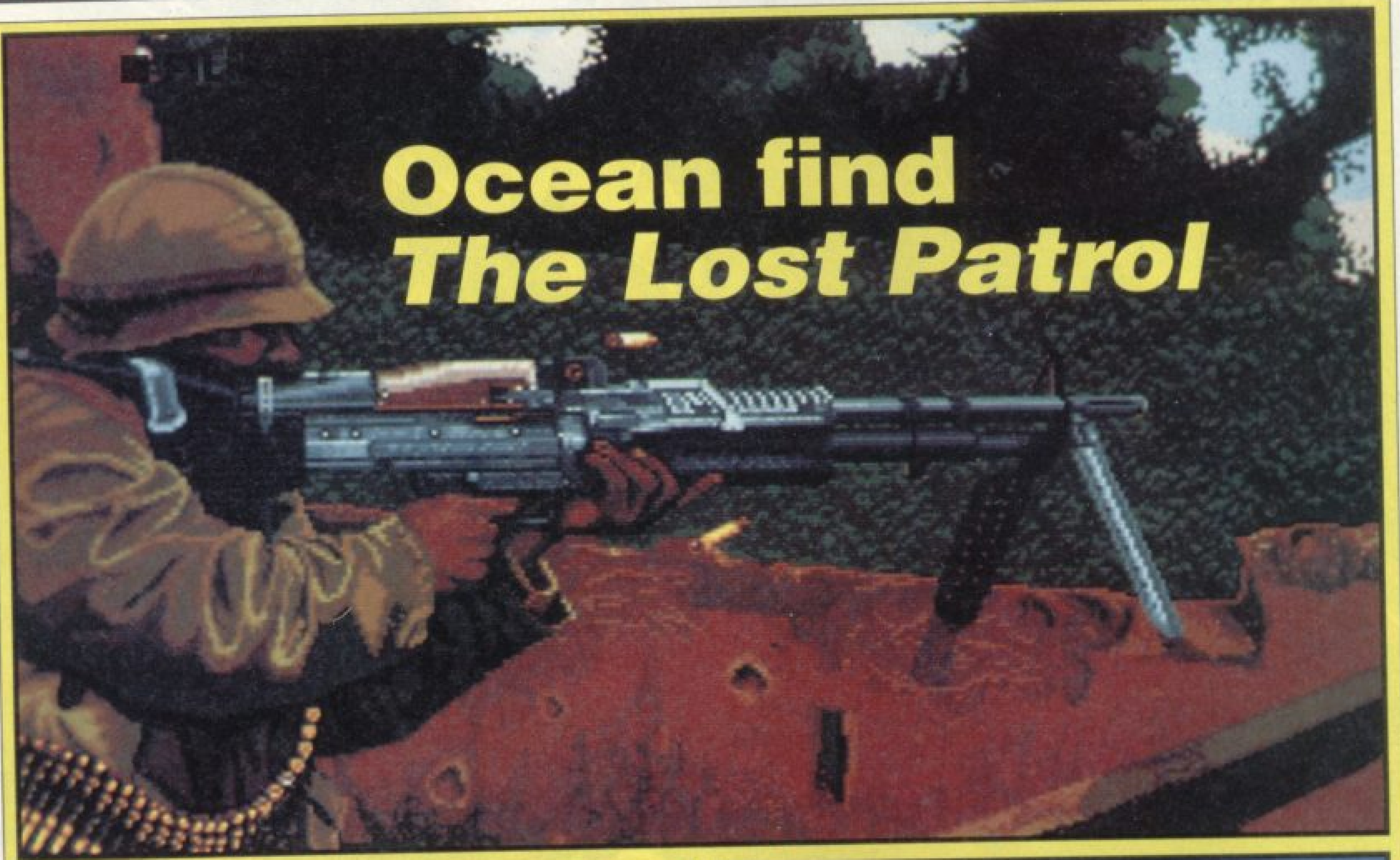
But this comes as no surprise to Mandarin's marketing manager, Chris Payne: 'What better way to take your mind off your business worries than to mentally slip away for a few minutes to take part in the *Lombard/RAC Rally*.'

Or as one executive who was questioned put it: 'If you hit the bottle during the working day, you wouldn't hold your job for long... Sex is a no-no unless you've got a very willing secretary and you don't work in open plan. But you can resort to playing computer games at any time — as long as you get it off the screen when someone approaches.'

Fast cars, fast women and fast access...

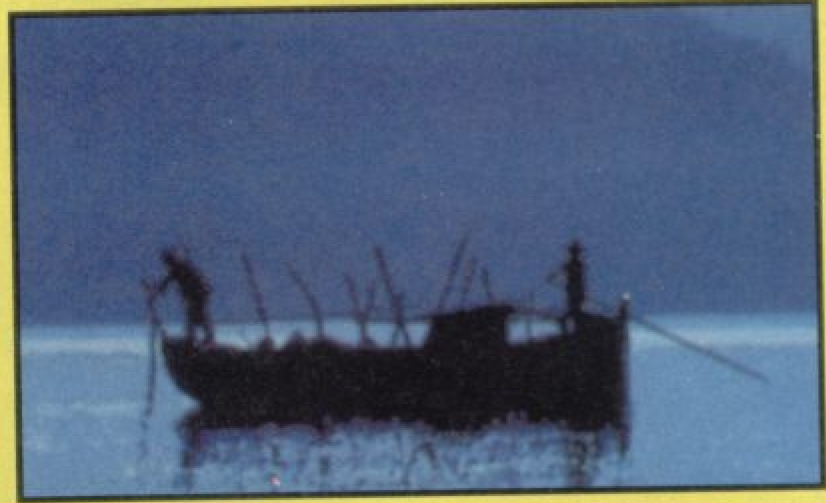

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A CRASH SMASH – CRASH.
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"The graphics are great with fast flowing backgrounds and smooth, speedy sprites. I now know what I would do if the five minute warning went off ... I would play S.D.I." F.A.B. – COMPUTER GAMES WEEK.
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TGM PREVIEWS



Ocean find *The Lost Patrol*





Ocean hope that the majority of screens in The Lost Patrol will be animated in some way. For example expect the people on the boat (right) to paddle

'It's going to be like Cinemaware but better!' says Ocean's Gary Bracey of their next 16-bit-only mega-release. *The Lost Patrol* (tentatively subtitled *Platoon II*) is Ocean's most innovative game yet, combining the picture quality of Cinemaware with the depth of gameplay we've come to expect from the Manchester-based company.

Polished until it sparkles, *The Lost Patrol* features animated screens the like of which we've never seen before (Bracey told TGM that the fighter pictured here will probably hold a rattling gun that ejects cartridges, in full animation).

The story is, like *Platoon*, based in Vietnam and coated with a thick layer of atmosphere. You must transport your platoon (each member has his own characteristics) from one side of the jungle to the other. On your travels, you will enter villages, encounter minefields and boobytraps, and root out and kill a rogue member (who varies each game) who is bad for your platoon's morale (he slices up villagers etc). There will be four or five sections, each containing arcade-style sequences.

Ocean's *The Lost Patrol* is to be launched at this year's PC Show in September on Amiga and ST. (Amiga screens.)

Undoubtedly a tribute to the 'Big Bug' films of the Fifties, *It Came From The Desert* could be Cinemaware's most filmic game yet. The town in which the action is set — Lizard Breath, Arizona — is rapidly losing people after a meteorite hits the nearby desert (shades of The Blob?). As the local scientist, you take it upon yourself to dig deep into the truth and research these disappearances.

After two years in development, *It Came From The Desert* should be out first on the Amiga in July, followed by PC, ST and C64 versions.

Cinemaware



Open wide

Say hello to (another) new face... sorry, force in computer software — Screen 7. First from Screen 7 comes the shark that ate a generation, in the game of Spielberg's 1975-movie, Jaws. (ST screen, right.)

Beyond sight and sound...

'You're travelling in another dimension. A dimension not only of sight and sound, but of mind.' Is there anyone who doesn't know that the next stop must be *The Twilight Zone*? Prepare yourself to enter First Row's graphic text adventure and become a 'normal person thrust into fantastic situations'.

Enter several stories that seem unrelated. The House begins it all — dull and boring, your room a mess. But there's many other locations, more interesting, and much more bizarre.



Excitement is not just graphical in this Stateside game we'll review next month

So far there's only an Amiga version of the classic 1959-1963 TV series. There are no icons or compasses, just a graphic window at the top which changes as you command your fate (graphics are drawn in low-res 32 colours). What will happen? Perhaps we know, but we aren't telling. One thing's for sure — the ending won't be dull. As Rod Serling would have said 'Picture yourself...'

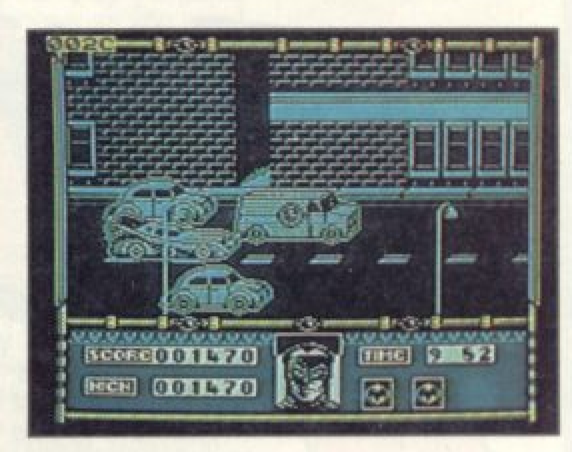


Currently available from First Row Software, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104. for $39.95 US. (Amiga only.)

MARSHAL M ROSENTHAL

We're
Untouchable

The long-awaited game of the Brian DePalma film, *The Untouchables*, is almost complete on the C64/128 (pictured), other versions will follow soon. Ocean are planning an autumn release.





Bats 'n' beetles



Star of *Beetlejuice*, Michael Keaton, dons a cape for *Batman — The Movie*, released to coincide with the computer game (or is it the other way around?) on August 11. *RoboCop* programmer, Mike 'Bat' Lamb grabs his accomplice, Dawn 'Joker' Drake (who provides the graphics), to produce the Spectrum version pictured.

Indiana Jones And The Last Crusade gets its cinematic premiere in the UK on June 30. Now we all know that US Gold are planning to release an action game from the film, but did you know that Lucasfilm's Gaming Division — executive producer George Lucas's own computer game company — is also producing a graphic adventure from the film's plot? Our man in the States, Marshal M Rosenthal, in an exclusive interview, speaks to Lucasfilm about their latest masterpiece.

Before we get some insight into the game from Noah Falstein, a bit of the movie plot. It's 1938 (after Raiders), and Hitler's out to find the Holy Grail. It's up to our boy to get it first! Indy is joined in the film by his father Henry Jones, who is a quite different personality from his son. More on the film over the page, but for now here's the computer interpretation of it.

Graphic Adventure builds on the legacy of *Maniac* and *Zak* — with animated characters and puzzles, plus added perspectives and action-orientated sequences. As before, you click on where you want the onscreen character to move, and then he'll do the rest. The verb section has been eliminated in favour of special choices which appear below the animation window when needed.

'You control Indy as he travels through Venice, Berlin, even the Middle East,' begins Falstein. 'Use his whip and your wits to acquire objects and solve puzzles. The game follows the movie, and even has some scenes which might have been taken out before the final release.' Falstein continues: 'One of the things you must do is locate Indy's father. Other characters appearing include the curator of the museum that Indy sells artifacts to — Marcus Brody.'

INDIANA JONES™

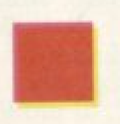
When trouble beckons — Indiana Jones rushes right in. But even he would have trouble with fickle computer gamers; some who want nothing but action, while others clamour for an adventure with problems to solve.

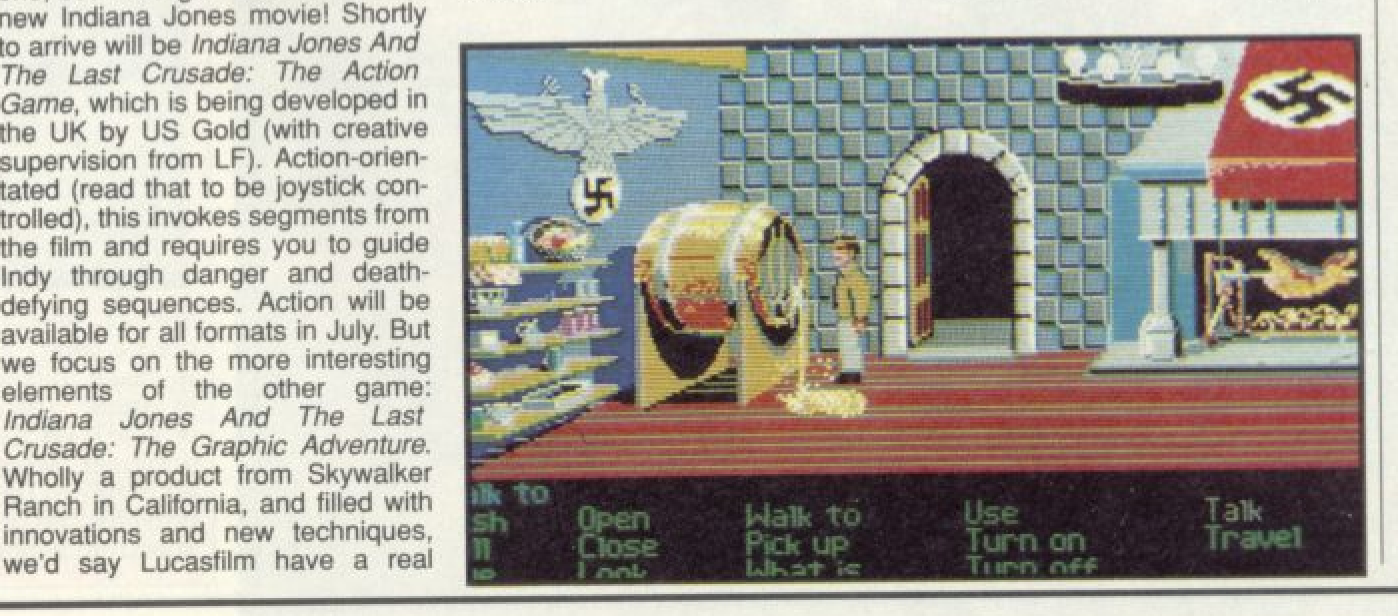
Heeding the call, Lucasfilm's Gaming Division dives in with not one, but TWO games based on the new Indiana Jones movie! Shortly to arrive will be *Indiana Jones And The Last Crusade: The Action Game*, which is being developed in the UK by US Gold (with creative supervision from LF). Action-orientated (read that to be joystick controlled), this invokes segments from the film and requires you to guide Indy through danger and death-defying sequences. Action will be available for all formats in July. But we focus on the more interesting elements of the other game: *Indiana Jones And The Last Crusade: The Graphic Adventure*. Wholly a product from Skywalker Ranch in California, and filled with innovations and new techniques, we'd say Lucasfilm have a real winner on their hands.

Gaming Division has pulled out the stops on this one. All the people involved are top-of-the-line: Noah Falstein (*Strike Fleet/Battlehawks*), Ron Gilbert (Maniac Mansion/Zak McKracken), and David Fox (*Ballblazer, Maniac, Zak*). Adding to the mix is system/graphic support by Aric Wilmunder, plus a team of three artists.

Falstein mentions that there are also various bad guys to deal with, Nazis and others we won't mention so as not to give it away. 'One of the nice touches is that you can try and talk to a bad guy,' says Falstein. 'Use 'charm' or 'wit' to get out of a bad situation rather than fighting. We've added a display of sentences to choose from which will appear when you encounter someone and decide to speak to them. Of course you may choose force instead — which takes you into one of our action sequences. But be warned,' cautions Falstein. 'We've got per-

"We've got permission from George Lucas himself to let Indiana be killed"





KEEPING UP WITH THE JONESES

mission from George Lucas himself to let Indiana be killed if he's backed up into a bad enough corner.'

Falstein points out that the action sequences highlight Graphic's differences from *Maniac* and *Zak*. 'One is in trying to get Indyout of the catacombs,' he says. 'It's a top-down view, and you only see the small area that he's in. He also has to escape from Germans while racing through catwalks within a zeppelin. This maze scrolls across, plus there are three levels horizontally. Whew!'

Indiana Jones is known for a liking of physical force, and there will be times when he will have to 'duke' it out with a foe. 'While we do have a Health bar like some of the other games,' notes Falstein, 'ours is different because Indy's blows become weaker if he just punches on and on. So expect to back pedal a bit before driving in an uppercut or body shot, and keep a watch on Indy's punch power to see how he's doing.' Falstein explains that this sequence is controlled using the keyboard because it is the easiest and most common denominator to all the computers whether to have Indy always on one side of the screen in this confrontation is still in debate — as then a punch to the left would also become one to the right, causing confusion).

Another action sequence has Indy flying a biplane while being pursued by enemy fighters. 'You have to keep the enemy from lining up a shot from behind,' admonishes Falstein. 'Accomplish this and Henry Jones (who's in the back with a machine gun) will do the rest.' A different perspective is also used here — with the view being from outside of the cockpit looking at the front of the biplane.

'We're extremely proud of our graphics and animation techniques,' beams Falstein. 'Characters are large and possess full animation, the quality is like that of an animated feature. For example, you want Indy to climb down a cliff so you click at the bottom. He'll do all the actions required, turn the proper way, stumble a little, even skid at the base as his shoes make contact with the ground. Or if Indy pounds a hole in the floor, cracks will appear. Objects are now visibly used! The characters also have a lot of body language. These and other touches, like the Indy Quotient (which keeps track of your score, and also of how many of the puzzles have been reached and solved) add up to what we feel is an outstanding game.'

The Graphic Adventure is a big game, with 100 unique locations, even more as each 'room' can be slightly altered to become totally new. 'One of our new techniques is called dynamic memory allocation,' says Falstein. 'This allows us to load segments into an area of computer memory called the heap, and it waits there to be used. Since this is going on all the time, it results in faster switching between scenes, and quickens the pace of the game. It's something for the player NOT to notice.'

Falstein's final point is that the game has been set up to allow for parallel paths to be used in reaching the end of the game. 'We wanted the person who didn't care for action sequences to still be able to get around without being penalised,' he says. 'This also means that you can play the game more than once because you won't have seen everything. Plus,' smiles Falstein, 'now you have a chance of doing things differently to what Indy did in the film — perhaps better.'

Indiana Jones And The Last Crusade: The Graphic Adventure will make its appearance first on the IBM in mid-July. Amiga and Atari ST versions will follow in September.

The Action Game from US Gold will appear on all formats July 1.

Following page: *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* — the movie

STOP PRESS

This is just off the wire. It seems that Lucasfilm will be releasing two new games later in the autumn. *Loom* is an epic fantasy set in pre-Arthurian times — a blend of graphic adventure with enhancements. *Their Finest Hour* relives the Battle of Britain (similar to *Battlehawks*) and utilises a new system for better game play. Take on targets on land as well as sea — even take off the land from fields.
Both are to be available for the IBM, with the ST and Amiga to follow.

"Characters possess full animation, the quality is like that of an animated feature"







It's not all strategy in The Graphic Adventure. Indy battles with a Nazi guard (other page, top) — and without his bullwhip! Programmer Falstein has recreated scenes from The Last Crusade with graphical excellence and precision. Eerie underground action (this page, top), and (right) outside Marcus Brody's University in New York. Left: Indy's about to battle again with the greatest enemy of the Thirties, the Nazis!

INDIANA JONES

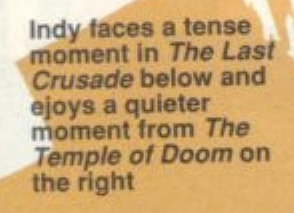
Fortune and Glory

The most popular movie adventurer of all time is back in action, once again chasing the fortune and glory synonymous with his creators: George Lucas and Steven Spielberg. Dominic Handy brings you the full behind-the-scenes story, and a few clues about the onscreen plot as well.

After two films based on literary masterpieces, *The Colour Purple* and *Empire Of The Sun*, Spielberg has returned to his roots with the third, and final part of the Indiana Jones trilogy. While it's unlikely to win Spielberg that elusive Best Director Oscar, the film has already won rave critical reviews and $30 million in its first week at the US box office. It's unlikely, though, that money was much motivation — despite the recent $56 million divorce settlement with actress Amy Irving. A personal fortune of $250 million means Spielberg (now 42) works only when he wants to.

It's almost ten years now since he and George Lucas first discussed the idea of the adventures of a heroic, do-anything archaeologist while on holiday together in Hawaii. With both having smashed box office records individually, movie moguls weren't going to deny them their fun. The resulting series has so far grossed $200 million. 'George is my brother,' Spielberg says. And they certainly love making movies together.

The Last Crusade, like the first two films, has Spielberg directing with Lucas and Frank Marshall as executive producers. The story is another Lucas creation, as are the special effects via his much-acclaimed Industrial Light and Magic company. Putting a further dent in the $36 million budget is some lavish Thirties scenery, zeppelins, tanks, biplanes and the 'creep factor' — Lucas and screenwriter Jeffery Boam have come up with a tunnel sewer sequence that features 7,000 expensively custom-farmed rats!



Indy faces a tense moment in *The Last Crusade* below and ejoys a quieter moment from *The Temple of Doom* on the right



Disillusioned

After *Temple Of Doom*, Spielberg became disillusioned with the Indy saga. He felt the second film didn't contain any of his personal feelings, and was too dark and horrific. However, when Lucas and Spielberg released *Raiders* in 1981 they made a handshake agreement to produce a trilogy of films. That, and the fact that Spielberg felt he had to make something of an apology for the second film, brought Lucas, Spielberg and Harrison Ford together for the third time.

The trio weren't the only ones reliving memories of *Raiders* as they started shooting the sequel on May 16, 1988 in a remote Spanish desert. Denholm Elliott is back as Marcus Brody, the British Director of the New York university museum, and John Rhys-Davies reprises his role as Indy's close friend Sallah. The production people are also largely veterans of the previous films.

New faces this time around include ex-Bond Sean Connery, playing Indy's father, Professor Henry Jones; River Phoenix, who stars as the 12-year-old Indy; and blonde, bright-eyed British actress, Alison Doody, as fellow archaeologist Dr Elsa Schneider.

Eye-openers

Raiders started with a breathtaking opening sequence (in which Indy's treasure was snatched from him in the South American jungles by arch enemy, Belloq), *Temple Of Doom* started with an astounding Berkeley-esque dance routine ('Anything Goes') in the Obi Wan Club (Lucas in-joke) where Indy loses a diamond amongst the ice cubes — this time to Lao Che — and *The Last Crusade* carries on the tradition of action-packed (an understatement) openers.

In the 16-minute introductory scene we are shown how Indy (Phoenix) finds his first piece of treasure (taking it from some hired hunters), how he gets his fedora hat (from the leader of the gang, who gets his treasure back but rewards the kid for his spunk: 'You lost today, kid, but that doesn't mean you have to like it.'), his first encounter with snakes (remember Indy encountering a snake in the cockpit of the plane and the 'floor that moved' in *Raiders*, and what about the snake that Kate Capshaw throws away in *Temple*...), and the usefulness of a whip as he comes face to face with an African lion in a circus train. We also find out about his father's obsession with the Holy Grail, and how our hero got his name (his real name is Henry, he adopted Indiana from his dog!)... 24 years later Indy (played by the 46-year-old Harrison Ford) gets back his treasure, the Cross of Coronado, and returns it to Marcus Brody in New York.

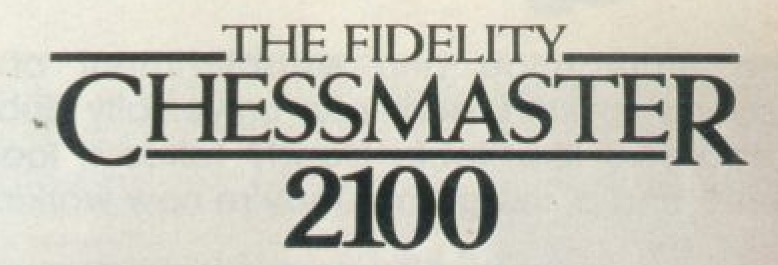
We are then transported to 1938, where Indy is invited by university benefactor Walter Donovan to find the Holy Grail ('the gift of eternal life to whoever drinks from it,' says Donovan). After recommending his father for the job ('You're speaking to the wrong Dr Jones'), Indy finds that Henry WAS on the job, but has been kidnapped! Indy takes colleague Marcus Brody along, as they set off for Italy which is in the grip of Fascism. This is where he meets up with the delectable Dr Schneider (Doody), his father's associate, who is soon to become Indy's new lady. As the tablet with clues of the whereabouts of the Grail — and also of his father — is found, Indy has closer and closer encounters with Nazis, and eventually with Hitler himself.

As the film progresses we find Henry Jones to be a meddling and interfering old man (superbly played by Connery, although 'Bond was better dressed,' says the 58-year-old) who makes moves on Indy's girl, Elsa, and eventually gets captured again, along with his friend, Brody.

The Last Crusade is very much in the style of *Raiders* — another action-packed bout of storytelling from Spielberg (George writes 'em, Steve tells 'em). And that's all I can say, without spoiling the plot. (Although, watch out for Donovan...) So make sure you're first in the queue when it opens in the UK on June 30.

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SOLID AS VECTOR

With the emergence and establishment of 16-bit computers, the graphical generation technique universally dubbed as 'vector' has had a new lease of life. Robin Candy takes a look back at its history, its exponents, and at the games they're now working on.

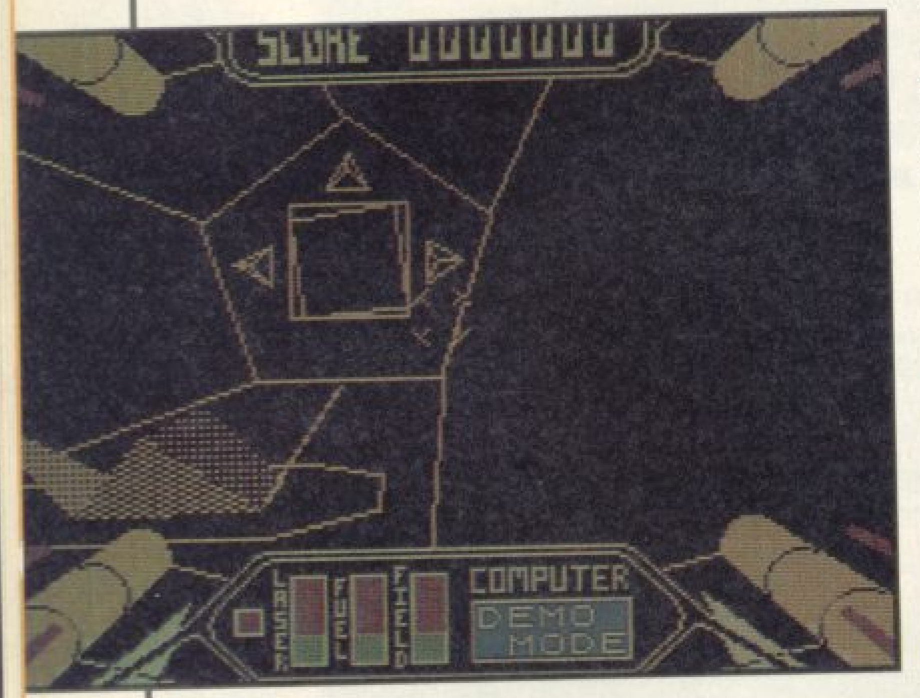
Despite what some newcomers to the 16-bit gaming world may think, vector graphics arrived in home computer games long before the Atari ST or Amiga. Back in 1983 the prefix 3-D was recognised as a major selling point in much the same way that certain software houses now use the suffix 'simulator'. Various methods of generating a 3-D atmosphere were developed (remember New Generation's *Trashman* perspective?) but none more effective than the technique of vector graphics.

Vanishing point perspective is often used in 3-D games. Each parallel line converges on a single point on the horizon; objects which are nearer to the player will appear larger than similar objects further away. While objects which are not moving straight toward the player will appear to move diagonally across the screen.

Vector graphics games use similar techniques to generate an illusion of 3-D, but there are a few major differences. All vector graphic games use a first person perspective — that is a cockpit or eyeball view of the playing area. While the vanishing point is not a sole dot on the horizon but the entire horizon. Light refraction techniques are employed to make the illusion even more convincing. Objects which are further away will appear paler and less strongly defined than objects which are close up.

Unlike sprite graphics, vector graphics are not drawn in the usual sense. Objects are defined by vectors (a mathematical expression of movement) which pinpoint the major points of an object relative to a central point on the screen (your view). Lines are then drawn between these points to construct a wireframe graphic as in *Elite* and *Battlezone*-type games. This may seem complicated but it does have a number of advantages over traditional sprite graphics. Each frame of a sprite animation has to be drawn separately. Complex animation (especially 3-D) requires numerous frames just for one object. Not only does this eat up memory but the quality of the graphics are entirely dependent upon the artistic abilities of the programmer. Once an object has been defined as a vector graphic it can be rotated through any angle — mathematical routines calculate the object's appearance from the new angle.

A vector graphic game in its purest sense is one which produces wireframe graphics. These were often criticised as unrealistic, since you could see through objects the games lacked a solid feel. It was easy to confuse the front and back end of an object. And since there was no hidden view when several objects were in the same vicinity, instead of being obscured by the foreground object they would seemingly merge together making the display cluttered and confusing. However, these problems soon disappeared with the arrival of 'solid vector graphics'. Strictly speaking, there are no such things as solid



Perhaps the most stunning Spectrum game ever, Realtime's Starstrike 2 was the first solid vector graphics game

Far right: inside the Vektor Grafics headquarters programming brainstorming sessions go on day and night.
Below: a screen from the forthcoming Bomber on the PC

REALTIME

Formed back in 1984, Leeds-based Realtime has more or less dominated the field of vector graphic games. All their games are designed and programmed by just three people: Andy Onions, Graham Baird and Ian Oliver. Their first release, *3-D Tank Duel*, was the best *Battlezone* game to ever appear on the Spectrum. Since then they've gone on to program classic after classic including *Starstrike 2* (arguably the most visually stunning game ever on the Spectrum), the Spectrum version of *Starglider* and *Carrier Command* (their first 16-bit game). Graham Baird explains why they chose to program vector graphics:

'It's very easy to program a simple sprite game, particularly if the computer has got a custom graphics chip. It takes a lot less time to write the basic program but you tend to rely heavily on a graphics artist to come up with the sprites. We chose to use vector graphics in our games because they pose more of a challenge to the programmer. The routines needed to generate fast effective 3-D are very complex but allow you greater flexibility with your graphics.'

Realtime's latest project is *Tank Command*, the sequel to the excellent *Carrier Command*. Realtime promise a very scenic game where the player's main objective is to drive a tank into enemy territory destroying anything that comes in its path. The exact details of the



vector graphics; they are in fact shaded polygon graphics but they have so much in common with vector graphics that they can be regarded as solid vector graphics.

They are generated by similar routines as wireframe graphics but instead of drawing lines the computer fills the area between certain points with shaded polygons. This is harder to program but the end result is much more realistic.

Solid vector graphics first appeared in 1986 with Realtime's *Starstrike 2* on the Spectrum. But when the power of 16-bit arrived, they really came into their own. This was entirely due to processing power. So far there hasn't been a home computer with a custom chip designed to cope with the complexities of 3-D graphics. Therefore, realistic solid vector graphics need a fast processor to handle the necessary intricate mathematical routines. The C64 handles sprite games very well because it has a custom graphics chip designed to do so, but its processor (a 6502) runs at a relatively slow speed. Consequently vector graphic games on the C64 tend to be rather slow and jerky when compared to those on computers with faster processors (even the Spectrum!).

The rise in popularity of 16-bit computers has given vector graphics a new lease of life. Over the next few months expect to see several new games which each claim to push the concept further than ever — it's going to be a great autumn for games players...

game are still a bit sketchy but TGM will bring you more news as it arrives.

Ian Oliver: 'We're concentrating much more on the gameplay. You can't build a game just around graphics. We use shaded polygon graphics because they do their job well. Speedwise we don't feel that we can get the games much faster than they already are but we can certainly improve the graphics. We were programming solid graphics on the Spectrum, obviously with the increased processing power of the 16-bit computers we expect to push the quality of 3-D graphics even further.'

Vektor Grafix, originally set up by Andy Craven and Danny Gallagher (the author of *Voyager* and now a freelance programmer), has quickly earned the reputation of one of the top 3-D development teams around today. Like Realtime, Vektor are also based in Leeds (just a few hundred yards from Realtime). Their first two games, *Star Wars* and *The Empire Strikes Back*, were both state-of-the-art conversions. However, Andy Craven promises that their latest 3-D will be even better.



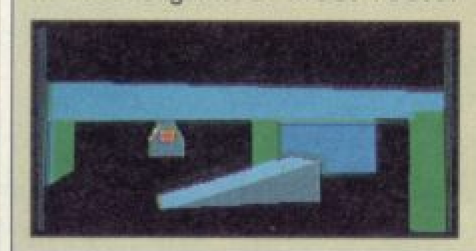
VEKTOR GRAFIX

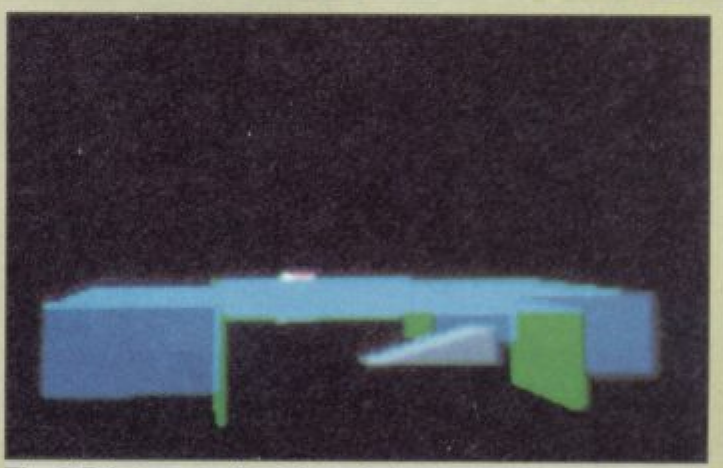
Bomber is Vektor Grafix's first original game. It combines both arcade and simulation elements along with stunning solid 3-D. The player can choose to pilot one of several aircraft. Both the player's craft and the enemy aircraft possess their own individual performance capabilities. There are numerous subgames and flight missions which are claimed to be more advanced than anything yet seen on a home computer. But before embarking on any of these you have to prove your worth as a pilot by practising take-offs and landings.



On the graphics front, *Bomber* features several graphics techniques never seen before. Across all PC graphic formats there is a total 2Mb of art! Until now all vector graphics games have constructed images using straight lines or polygons but the graphics on Bomber have gone one step further and include curves.

The two Vektor Grafix demos pictured both show new aspects of solid 3-D which will be incorporated in future games. Most vector





The 3-D future: to the left and above, the 'Wedge' demo

SOLID AS A ROCK

Still shots never show the speed or quality of animation, but this simple 'Robbie the Robot' demo allows a full three-dimensional freedom to the player





graphics games allow the player to move through an object (such as a tunnel) but never show one object moving through another.

The Wedge demo clearly shows a ship of some kind moving through a building, all of which can be viewed from any angle (even down to following the wedge through the building, or viewing from inside the hut). While the Robbie the Robot demo uses a sphere to create Robbie's head, once again the observer can view Robbie from any angle and can zoom in and out. It's a shame that the pictures can't show the speed or quality of the animation.

Vektor's policy is not to ignore problems that may prove difficult to program, but to persevere and push the technique even further. Realtime are often seen in the Vektor Grafixoffices, 'just coming in to chat over a few problems.' In fact both companies are combining to produce their own development system ('we both keep finding bugs in this one'). And both are doing the niche of vector graphics the 3-D world of good!

Another PC screen from Bomber



ARGONAUT

It only took one game to launch Jez San and the Argonaut team into the limelight. *Starglider* was an instant hit on what was then a fledgling Atari ST. The follow up, *Starglider 2*, ensured that Argonaut were a force to be reckoned with. Over the last couple of months TGM has been exclusively chronicling the progress of Argonaut's next blockbuster, *F-117A Aggressor* (though the final game will probably be called something different).

F-117A Aggressor: a 3-D world you can explore as you see fit without directions to complete the game in a set order



Jez San describes the new game as a 'global combat simulator' and 'the most realistic aircraft simulation to date'. The player has a number of fixed objectives but won't be directed to complete them in a set order. You can explore the 3-D world as you see fit. The finished game will contain 30-40 aircraft, any of which the player can choose to pilot. Each of these aircraft have their own flight specifications and obey fully the laws of aerodynamics, making stalls and rolls possible. Just in case you're not a flight simulation fan you can switch to simple flying mode and concentrate on completing the missions.

Jez San believes that this is the best Argonaut game yet: 'We're really proud of the speed of the graphics. It's all very well saying your game is one of the fastest 3-D games around but if the graphics are simple and there isn't much happening on screen it doesn't really mean anything. We've got graphics made up of 60-70 polygons and the game's still fast.'

And the future of vector graphics?: 'In the short term, gameplay will improve and the games will get faster, but I can't forsee any major improvements in the vector graphics themselves. Vector graphics can never be as pretty as sprites, but we're aiming to introduce games which combine both techniques — shaded polygon graphics for the bulk of the object and sprites for fine detail such as the rocket fire on a space ship. However, in the long term with advances in hardware we can expect a number of improvements such as proper shadows and an increase in the amount of polygons per object, thus making the graphics far more complex and realistic.'



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The Games machine REVIEWS

24 ■ WICKED

Electric Dream's latest blockbuster certainly lives up to its name on the 16-bit machines. Those of you who are astrologically minded take a look at the review on page 24, it certainly scared the willies out of us when we played the game.

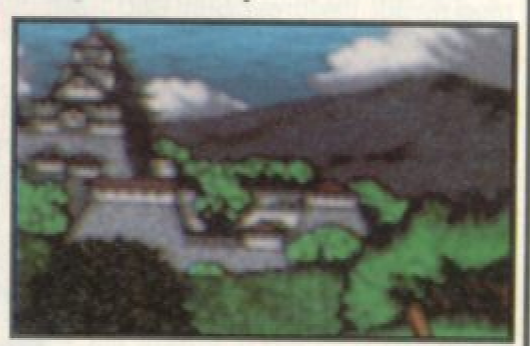
The Games machine TOP SCORE



The Games machine STAR PLAYER

30 ■ LORDS OF THE RISING SUN

Just when you though it was safe to return to your computer, Cinemaware bring you another multi-disk extravaganza, this time set in the land of the rising Yen. Bruddy wonderfurr fun.







38 ■ THUNDERBIRDS

With not a sound (thank goodness) from Fuzzbox, International Rescue leap into action. Can the Hood be stopped, will Parker h'accidently prang lady Penelope's Rolls Royce. If you can't wait for next weeks episode read the review on page

26 ■ PROJECT FIRESTART

With obvious inspiration from the movies *Alien* and *Aliens* designed by HR Giger, *Project Firestart* gets the adrenalin going and quite successfully portrays what the packaging claims it is: a horror movie in outer space.

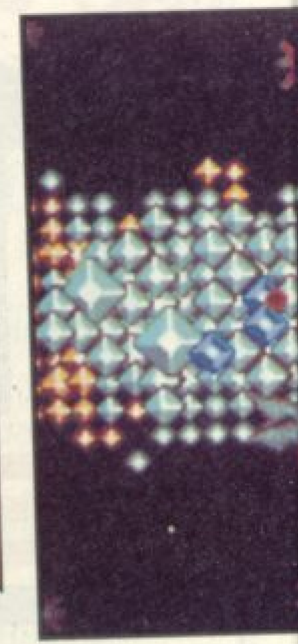
PRESS ANY KEY

Something this way comes..

WICKED

Electric Dreams

The Games machine TOP SCORE



Once again the Universe is in danger, not this time from aliens but from Old Nick himself. Evil forces have penetrated the 12 constellations of the Zodiac (through Portals of Destruction) and are even now threatening life as we know it (cue spooky organ music). But the great Sun God is well aware of this evil deed so he calls for you, a brave and fearless hero to defeat the threat.

To carry out your task to the full you must suffer the Ritual Of The Ring Of Flames, which turns you into a fiery character better suited to the task at hand than the frail human you once were (and hopefully will again one day be).

The game starts with a circle divided into 12 sections, each bearing a sign of the Zodiac (Scorpio easiest, Sagittarius hardest). And so that you don't go getting into deep water on your first attempt, you're only allowed to choose one of the first three signs.

While you dog this an evil eye watches your every move from the centre of the circle, but don't worry all it can do is glare malevolently at you. So poke that rather nasty looking knife in the general direction of your chosen star sign and prepare for the battle against Evil.

The screen clears and a representation of the chosen sign appears. Three of the stars making up each sign glow — it is to these three that you will travel to battle the forces of Evil. Portals both Good and Evil appear on the battlefield emitting growths which attempt to smother rival portals. This is the way to win the game, blast your way through the blue evil growths to reach the evil portals. You can't kill them directly, but the idea is to clear a path for good growths to charge through and destroy them for you.

The counter-attack comes. Guardians are called up from the darkest regions of Hell to try to stamp your card. Throughout the game the Good and Evil forces struggle for domination, aided in part by day and night. In daytime a sun symbol appears in the centre of the screen, here the guardian is at his weakest, so a few swift shots can send him back to Hell for a short while. Also the Good portals produce spores, which you can collect and by placing them on existing Good spores a new portal is created. At night the beast appears and Evil spores are created. These you must destroy quickly or in turn they will create Evil portals.

Occasionally the face in the centre splits and displays a Tarot card from out of which a special crystal flies out. When collected it bestows a special power; whether this is good, evil or mixed is up to you to discover, but the good ones include a shield, extra lives, rapid spore growth and multiple shots.

A novel approach to the problem of poo

3-D POOL

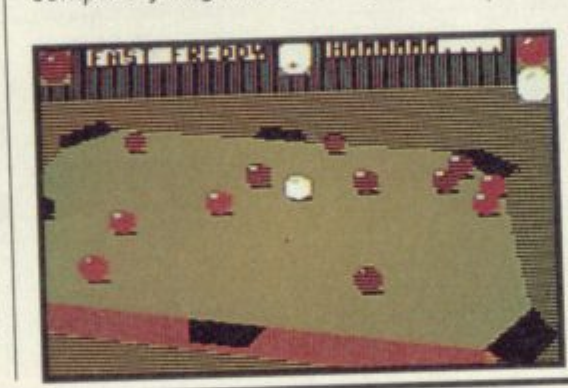
Firebird

You could be forgiven for not knowing 'Maltese' Joe Barbara, the current European and UK pool champion, which is probably why his name and face aren't splashed all over the packaging for this, the product he's endorsing.

Not only is everything in isometric 3-D, but you don't move the cue in this game! How so? The ball always goes up the screen towards the centre of the table and it's the table which is rotated so that the cue ball faces the object ball. The table is tilted forward and back to add top- or backspin; left- and right-hand sidespin can also be used, and of course shot strength is variable.

A one-player game puts you in the quarter-finals of a tournament, facing Joe in the final; a two-player game is available if you want to involve a friend.

Trick Plays are ball set ups where the cue player attempts to pot all the balls of his colour (there's no opponent) without directly hitting one of the other colour. 3-D Pool allows the set-up of customised or completely original Trick Plays.



After the many plan-view ball-and-cue games, 3-D Pool is a breath of fresh air for budding Hendrys, literally adding a new dimension to computerised pool. The graphics on these formats are neither realistic nor particularly convincing, but the concept of rotating a table, with balls shifting in perspective, makes gameplay intriguing and more interesting than usual billiards games.

If snooker or pool is your sport, you'll def

SPECTRUM 71%

£9.99 cass, £14.99 disk

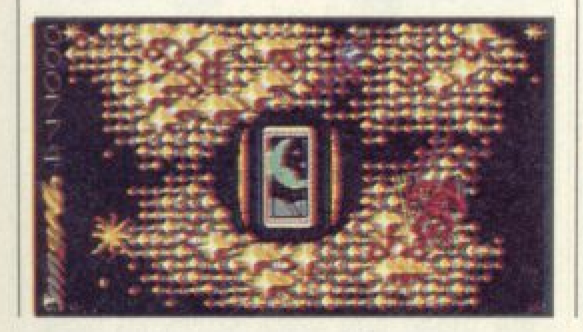
Other than upper screen displays, everything is in green and black with lots of checked shading. This can be a strain on the eyes at times but both table and ball movement are smooth. The best 3-D of the versions reviewed.



Speed is of the essence and time is short. Take too long destroying the Evil portals and a drum begin beating shortly followed by Evil dominating the screen (and you losing a life). Once a constellation (ie all three stars) have been saved, it's back to the circle again to chose the next destination.

Can you save the Universe from Evil? Well you certainly have great fun trying. *Wicked* is one of those increasingly rare beasts which has a very simple idea, is original, but which creates a game very hard to stop playing. Well done Binary Vision/Electric Dreams, this game really is WICKED.

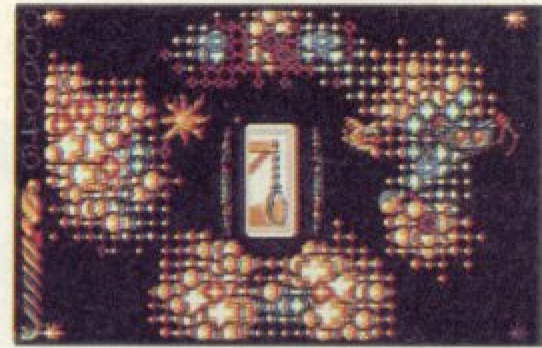
Mark Caswell





£24.99

One of the best shoot-'em-ups for a long while, Wicked is graphically and sonically nothing short of amazing. the Evil creatures really do scare the willies out of you, as indeed does the eerie music. Large colourful sprites and atmospheric music/effects blend together to make a game worthy of its Top Score accolade.



At night (top) Evil dominates, but in th day (above and below) there's a chance of getting ahead



£19.99

I'm not surprised to see that both games are graphically identical, but the bouncy tunes on the ST version don't really fit the game so well, which does something to dampen the atmosphere so essential to Wicked's enjoyment. Gameplay remains as thrilling however.

OTHER FORMATS

A Commodore version is planned for later in the year, but no other formats are being considered.

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initely want it in your collection. If not, give it a try anyway, as you're likely to be in for a pleasant surprise.

Warren Lapworth

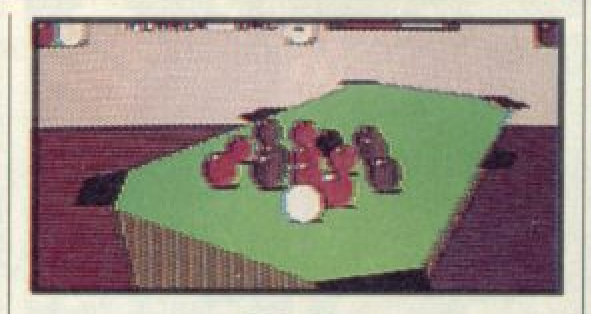


£9.99 cass, £14.99 disk

Nasty shading on the background and table base, but balls and tabletop are definined simply — an advantage in the case of 3-D Pool. Table movement is jerky and slow; ball movement is similarly slothful, but gameplay is undamaged.

OTHER FORMATS

Atari ST, Amiga (both £19.99) and MSX (£9.99) should be available by the time your eyes scan this page.



AMSTRAD 68%

£9.99 cass, £14.99 disk

Hardly beautiful, the backgrounds are patterns of green and black stripes. The table and its balls aren't too bad (though the sticking-out pockets look ridiculous) and rotate adequately, if jerkily and a little slowly. Ball movement and perspective is quite good; sound effects are rubbish.

Magic tails

SPHERICAL

Rainbow Arts

Spherical is the latest release from German based company Rainbow Arts and sets the player in the shoes of a white haired, long bearded wizard. Of course this wizard is a little absent minded and so finds himself trapped in 100 meanie-filled levels with nothing for company but his familiar in the guise of a magical sphere.

But this is no ordinary wizard, no this guy knows some pretty nifty spells, and he needs them to survive the rigours of the tortuous rooms. His most useful spell is the ability to create stones, with these he can reach some of the less accessible ledges and collect the bonus symbols. These build up his spell power and allow him to perform some pretty impressive party pieces including fireballs (to destroy the denizens of the foul dungeons, and rest assured there are plenty of these) and control teleports etc.

What's the point of all this leaping and jumping around in these dull and dreary places, well your spherical pal is trapped somewhere in the room, release him and he'll guide you to the exit. It takes a while to gain full control of the various magical spells that our whiskered pal can perform, but he's soon merrily leaping around from ledge to ledge zapping meanies and turning nasty little children into frogs etc (only joking kiddies).

Mark Caswell



Enjoyable wizard action on the ST



ATARI ST 73%

£19.99

Graphically the game is good with some amusing little touches and a creepy atmosphere that lends itself well to the game. Spherical is an action/strategy game that is worth its weight in bats, toads and puppy dog tails.

PRESS ANY KEY

A broken Prometheus

PROJECT FIRESTART

Dynamix/Electronic Arts

Today, the slightest form of genetic engineering on animals is greatly frowned at, but according to programming and design team Dynamix, the middle of the 21st century — 2066, to be exact — even humanoids will be practised on.

The experiment, financed by the US System Science Foundation, began on February 13 and was named Project Firestart. The research spaceship Prometheus was its base and its aim was to develop 'volunteer' animals into strong resilient workers. Semi-intelligent powerhouses were needed to help mine precious minerals from the more awkward areas of moons and asteroids, where machinery could not work.

The scientists and geneticists were given strict restraints as to the extent of the animals' restructuring, to avoid the very real risk of producing dangerous or useless creatures.

Nevertheless, something went wrong. Calls to the orbiting craft were not answered; it floated silently in space, still as death. Certainly there were dead aboard the Prometheus — almost the entire crew in fact, other than two scientists held in suspended animation. But the craft was teeming with life: evil, powerful, untamed and, above all, monstrous life. The geneticists had gone too far, and produced an army of psychotic, flesh-eating green beasts.

You, as the hero, have just docked with the Prometheus ('How was it for you, darling?') and must regain control of the ship, eliminating the mutated beasts before they breed into an unstoppable force that could spread to Earth. And naturally you'll want to save the gorgeous scientist, Mary; she and Annar are the only other humans on board.

Running along corridors or exploring rooms (maps of the ship's four levels are thoughtfully provided, though details of rooms are left for you to fill in), you're armed with a laser pistol. Replacement guns can be found when the charge level gets low, and security passes let you use restricted-access rooms and lifts.

Dynamix have taken an unusual slant in that the arcade exploration is occasionally interrupted, changing to large, cinematic-style and animated scenes. Of course, Cinemaware have done this often before, but their games are much less directly action-orientated and the *Project Firestart* 'intermissions' are more of a contrast to the actual game than Cinemaware's.

The movie scenes aren't wasted, either, as finding your way around the ship, blasting nasty green monsters and gaining access to different places with newly found passes, is both absorbing and exciting. There's obvious inspiration from movies *Alien* and *Aliens*, but although the mutant creatures aren't as big and threatening as those designed by HR Giger, they still get the adrenalin going. *Project Firestart* quite successfully portrays what the packaging claims it is: a horror movie in outer space.

Warren Lapworth

The Games Machine STAR PLAYER



Lift the lid off what is described as 'a horror movie in space'



£14.99 disk

C64/128 87%

The sprites are blocky — the lumbering green and black creatures could have been a lot more menacing — but the hero runs fairly realistically if a little slowly. Backgrounds are bland in both definition and use of colour: shades of grey and simple outlines are the general standard. The cinematic scenes (though again lacking in colour) are well done, with good animation considering the graphic size; the best scene is the death sequence, where the prone hero's head slumps to the ground, blood spreading from a fatal wound. Audio is a disappointment — predictable simple melodramatic melodies using old-fashioned sounds and effects — but is used abruptly and appropriately enough to add to the spooky atmosphere.

OTHER FORMATS

Electronic Arts feel that too much would be lost if the movie scenes were cut out of the game to accomodate a cassette. More unfortunate still, there are no plans for other versions of the Project.

Creepy crawlies creep back into fashio

EVIL GARDEN

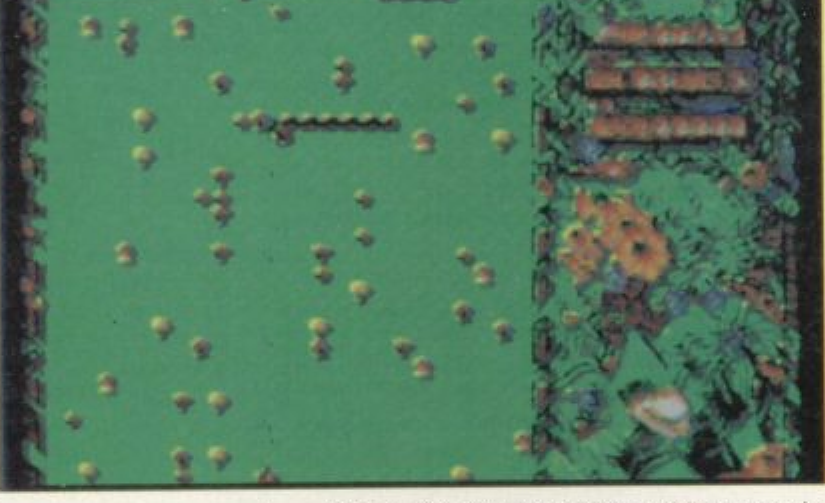
Demonware

Aaah help, I'm being haunted by ghosts from the past, centipedes keep wandering across the monitor screen. *Centipede* was a big arcade hit yonks ago and now it seems Demonware (a company from Germany) have taken this old theme, dusted it off and decided to make a few Deutschmarks with it.

You play the part of a mercenary type chap whose motto is 'bugger the fame and glory and just give me the cash', and you sure could make some dosh on this job, but then you could also wind up dead. Your task is to eradicate 32 screens filled with nasty centipedes, spiders, various mushrooms and the occasional demon (spooky).

So as you sit at the bottom of a screen filled with mushrooms you wonder if the gun you bought with you will be powerful enough to destroy all and sundry. You start with a .44 Magnum (as endorsed by Clint Eastwood), but by shooting pumpkins which occasionally appear add-on weapons can be acquired. These include hearts (extra life), guns (add to firepower) and shields.

As with the original *Centipede*, mushrooms prove to be more a hindrance than help, because the insects rebound off them at a rate of knots... generally in your direction.



Nothing really new in the garden

Add to this the bouncing spiders, manic lice who literally drop from the sky onto you (and spread foul mushrooms at the same time) and the demons and ghosts who make the infrequent but very unwelcome visit, life gets hectic. The best tactic I found is to stay away from the edge of the screen as much as possible (to avoid the spiders), and concentrate on blasting the mushrooms at the beginning of each round (this gives you a clear shot at the centipedes).

A combination of pretty graphics and pleasantly frustrating gameplay make *Evil Garden* worthy of consideration, especially if you're old enough to be suffering Centipede withdrawl symptoms.

Mark Caswell



Price TBA

Evil Garden **adds little to the original** Centipede, **but it contains the same sort of pleasantly frustrating gameplay. The graphics are bold and colourful, in-game sound is limited to a few appropriate effects, but a boppy tune plays on the intro screen. Unfortunately no prices or version update details are yet available, but the usual Amiga price is expected to apply.**

Fairies hit Commodorean

STORMLORD

The Games machine STAR UPDATE

Hewson £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk
Spectrum 86% — TGM018
Amstrad CPC 84% — TGM019

The large and colourful sprites of this 8-bit version compare very favourably with the Spectrum original, with the added advantage of a pleasant in-game tune to keep the action going. In every respect a highly playable and polished piece of entertainment software.

TGM Update 85%

VERSION UPDATES

ATARI ST ■ COMMODORE 64/128

Grand Monster Slam

GOLDEN GOBLIN/RAINBOW ARTS £19.99
Amiga 76% — TGM019

Identical in appearance to the Amiga game, the ST version suffers with its sound by comparison. But that's no serious drawback to an ST owner, because Grand Monster Slam is an amusing and action-packed game that



will drag you back until you've completed it. Sadly this isn't the case with the C64 game, any vestige of playability is completely squashed by the terrible multi-load tape system. After almost every event the play button has to be pressed and another few seconds of data loaded. We haven't seen the disk version, but hopefully it will improve the situation.

TGM update: Atari ST 74%
Commodore 64/128 55%

ATARI ST

The Real Ghostbusters

ACTIVISION £19.99
Spectrum 86% — TGM018
Commodore 64 78%, Amstrad CPC 74%
Amiga 57% — TGM019

As unimpressive as the Amiga version. Slim Ghostbusters, fashioned in only three colours, slide jerkily and stupidly through scenes of strangely drawn perpsective, while minimally animated and badly drawn monsters attack. Both sound effects and music are crude and irritating. Only for real Real Ghostbusters fans.

TGM update 55%

PC

RoboCop

OCEAN £19.99
Spectrum 81%, Commodore 64 77% — TGM015, Amstrad CPC 78% — TGM017Amiga and Atari ST 90% — TGM018

Acclaimed, and just about out on every format you can think of (except the Dragon), the PC *RoboCop* is sadly a disappointment. Purple is the predominant colour in the PC version, and RoboCop cripples around as if his armour had rusted. Add to this the sheer weight of numbers which attack poor old Murphy, it's a wonder he even has time to clear his gun from its holster. Ocean's PC conversions have generally been pretty hot, pity this one isn't.

TGM update 48%

A title almost as long as the game it's about.

JACK NICKLAUS'S GREATEST 18 HOLES OF MAJOR CHAMPIONSHIP GOLF

Accolade

In 1988, Jack Nicklaus was voted Player of the Century, an extremely prestigious title which seems perfectly justified when viewing his history in the world of golf. 21 victories in the Major Championships, 19 second placings, scoring records for the US and British Opens, the only player to have won all four American majors, the only player who's won five different majors...

He's also quite a course designer, with 51 of his courses spread throughout the world, soon to be joined by 17 others. Two of his designs are included in this lengthy-titled game: Castle Pines and Desert Mountain. The main course (no food jokes please), as the title states, are Jack's choice of the best holes in championship golf, selected from famous courses such as Muirfield, St Andrews and Augusta National.

The difficulty of this specially formed collection of holes can be eased in BEGINNER mode, where the effects of wind and slope are less severe. Each hole can also be taken from one of three tee positions, enabling the drive length to be altered.

Putting and driving may be practised before selecting a course and beginning a round. This can be an ordinary game, attempting to gain the best score below par, or made more interesting by playing against computer-controlled players from the eight available. 'Skins' games can also be played, where golfers compete for money.

An overhead view of the hole is shown (and may be viewed at any time) before the perspective changes to a view from behind the golfer sprite. The club is selected (automatically in BEGINNER) and the shot lined up with a golf ball at the top of the screen, using the small flag graphic which lies next to it as a reference point. The circular wind direction meter has to be taken into consideration, and break meter (indicating slope) when on the green.

A vertical bar to the left of the main screen area sets the strength of the shot; the level rises (thermometer-style, but at high speed) and where it's stopped determines the strength percentage of the shot. Where the level is stopped as it descends determines the accuracy of the shot: before the baseline and the shot hooks to the left; after the baseline and it slices the ballto the right.

It's surprising how popular golf games have been during the past two years, ranging in style from the bizarre light-hearted but brilliantly playable *Zany Golf*, to Leaderboard, the equally playable game which began the whole trend. Though *Jack Nicklaus's Golf* offers computer opponents and the gamble of Skins, it will be of little interest to Commodore 64 owners, as they are more than catered for with the *Leaderboard* games and courses. PC owners, however, don't have the same amount of choice, and should find *Jack Nicklaus's Golf* easy to learn and fun to play. The probable future prospect of course disks (see box) will be a welcome change when the original 54 holes have become boring — though with skill settings, computer opponents and Skins games, it could be a while before that happens.

Warren Lapworth



£24.95 — PC 79%

A nice range of colours is used but a lot of ugly shading mars the appearance of holes, which are drawn in quite slowly, and the Nicklaus portrait between holes makes him look almost zombiefied. Though nothing special, the definition and animation of the golfer is nice. Ball trajectories are accurate enough, but perspective as it goes away is crude — near the horizon the ball isn't drastically smaller than when it's ten yards away! Audio is standard PC spot effects.

£9.95 cass
£16.95 disk — C64/128 62%

The graphics are drawn a little quicker than the standard PC, but shading is dull and repetitive and the trees look semi-petrified. Golfer animation lacks frames but ball movement/perspective is reasonable. Sound effects are fitting thwacks and clunks.

OTHER FORMATS

Although European release dates are not firm, Amiga and ST versions will (probably) be released in the future, pricing likely to be £24.95/£19.95.



Cool, fresh outdoor colours — almost makes you wish you were really out on the course at Augusta, playing the Masters...

JACK NICKLAUS COURSE DISKS

PC £11.95, Commodore 64 disk £8.95

The release of supplementary disks in Europe is yet to be finalised, but each will contain three famous courses. There have been four disks released in the USA, giving 216 more holes in total; disk one contains the entire courses of Oak Hill, Royal Troon and Kemper Lakes.

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Disk swapping and swashbuckling in medieval Japa

LORDS OF THE RISING SUN

Cinemaware/Mirrorsoft

What's small, blue, plastic-coated and needs changing as often as a baby's nappy? Yes, Cinemaware have come up with another of their epic saga games to challenge your disk swapping arm. Not content with saving England from the Normans, The Caliph of Bagdad from life as a Falcon and the world from Nazi domination, *Lords of the Rising Sun* hurls us back in time to the middle ages and over the world to the bloody times of Japanese samurai warriors.

Ruled by the law of the samurai sword, two feudal families had been battling for power for years — the Taira and Minamoto.

In 1156 the feud came to a head in one of the bloodiest battles ever witnessed. The Taira were victorious and put the Minamoto warlord, Minamoto Tameyoshi, to the sword leaving his son Yoshimoto in charge.

Yoshimoto had a stab at revenge three years later, but was again defeated, and all of his followers were executed except for his two small sons. Yoshimoto escaped, only to be killed a short time later in Eastern Japan.

Years passed, but the two lads Yoshitomo and Yoshitsune never forgot the humiliation that the Taira clan had brought to their family, and they swore vengeance.

Now it's 1180 and you're at the beginning of an epic struggle to restore your family name, first you have to choose which commander to control. Yoshitomo has the political clout, but Yoshitsune's battle skills are second to none. As you travel around Japan other families are on the move, some friendly to Taira others to you. Alliances with friendly clans are essential to increase your popularity and thus win the game.

Also essential to the plot are four sacred objects which can bring great honour to the Minamoto who discovers them: the Shrine of Hachiman, the Sacred Scroll, the Sacred Sword and — probably the greatest prize of all — the Emperor's daughter.

On your travels you come across castles, cities and monasteries .With castles and cities you can request an alliance and if they refuse lay siege and take the buildings by force (of course this costs lives). If it's possible monasteries give you supplies essential to keep your soldiers in fighting form.



It's obviously clear that battles are inevitable and they usually occur in taking a city or castle, but also should you meet a rival clan along the road. Changing climatic conditions often determine the outcome of a battle, but not too much honour is lost if you run like hell if the tide turns against you.

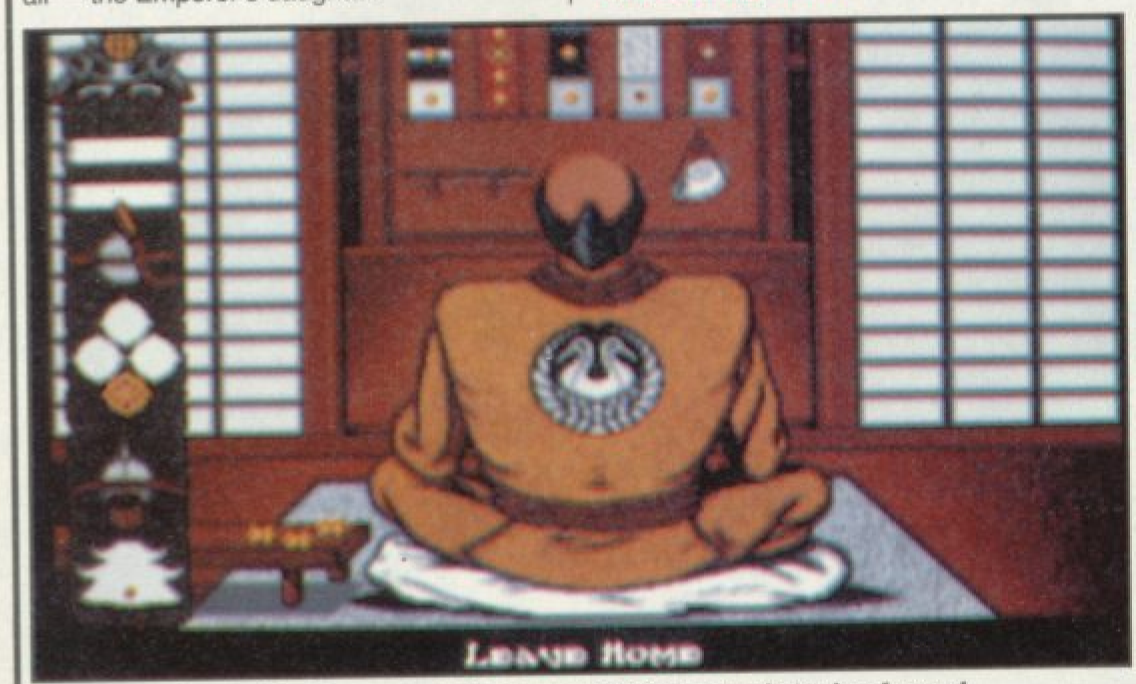
Success has its price too: get too big for your samurai boots andyour jealous rivals may set a ninja assassin on your trail. Thenagain, you could also do the same to them.

Warren Lapworth

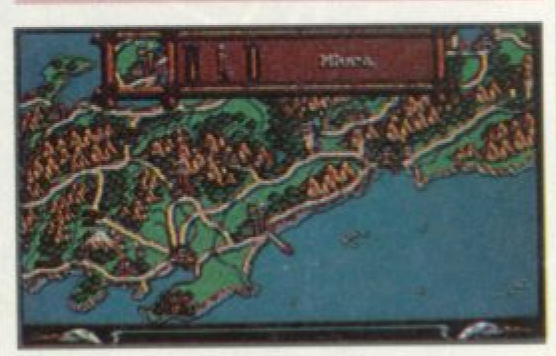
The Games Machine STAR PLAYER

£29.99 — AMIGA 86%

Although the story is a trifle slow moving in places, the great graphical detail coupled with the compelling gameplay make this a game worthy of a few yen. And to be fair the two disks don't have to be changed as often as that. If you enjoy buckling a swash without too much exercise, take a look at Lords of the Rising Sun.



Peace and meditation are not commodities much to be found



From interludes, like the one above, to the map, it's quality graphics from Cinemaware

OTHER FORMATS

A PC version priced £29.99 will be available in October, though the Atari ST and Commodore 64 games (£24.99 and £19.99 respectively) won't be available until Christmas.

AMERICAN INDOOR SOCCER

Mindscape

The in-depth sporting strategy of Mindscape's new series was acclaimed last issue (*American Ice Hockey* 71%), and now it deals with the more-than-frequently computerised sport of football.

American Indoor Soccer puts you in the role of manager/coach/captain of a team at the bottom of the Major Indoor Soccer League. Before a match is played, and subsequently between matches various facts and figures can be viewed and adjusted. Team and league statistics can be displayed (points, matches played, won, lost, tied etc) and gradually developed as matches and seasons are played.

You begin with 250 trading points which may be used to improve the team in a variety of ways. GENERAL IMPROVEMENT affects the whole team's performance (as if they'd been sent training); the more trading points spent the better. Before a player may be RECRUITED, a member of the existing squad must be dropped. The new player is named and his offensive and defensive skills adjusted (indicated by bar graphs) as desired, but only at the cost of trading points. A player can be TRADED for one in another team (once their strengths/weaknesses have been assessed), but usually at the expense of trading points.

The assembled team are assigned playing positions on the field. Control of your team's centre player, goalie and coach can be switched between computer or human control; the systems allow two people to control different members of the team.

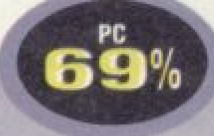
COACHING allows you to change players' positions and playing strategies, while total power, effective power, offensive strength and defensive strength are shown as bar graphs to indicate the effectiveness (or otherwise) of your tactics.

Action sequences enter the game when you control the midfielder, who can play a number of different shots, and the goalie with different saves.

It looks and plays very similarly to *American Ice Hockey*. The strategy/tactics sections are identical, other than names (and names of actions), and the control and depiction of an actual game are also the same. Putting similarities aside, soccer fans wanting a new type of game will warm to this. It isn't fast arcade action and isn't in the style of ordinary football manager games, but still offers as much as most. The strategies and tactics needed, statistics to view and trading points to spend mean there's a lot for people who like to flex their brain cells — but not if they've already got *American Ice Hockey*.

Warren Lapworth

£24.99



Functional clarity is the order of the day for statistics screens; dull but adequate. The pitch and men are virtually featureless, and use unsavoury colours. Animation and scrolling are okay, and sound is excusable.

OTHER FORMATS

Amiga, Atari ST (both £24.99) and Commodore 64 (cass £9.99, disk £14.99) all to be released shortly, and will look and play similarly to the PC.

VERSION UPDATES

ATARI ST

Dragon Ninja

IMAGINE £19.99

Spectrum 61%, Commodore 64 47%
Amstrad CPC 63% — TGM017

Average in 8-bit gameplay, ST ninjering is a graphically impressive business. The backdrops are all nicely drawn with some amusing details (like Ocean posters...). But sprite movements are poor and scrolling is slow and juddery. The control, too, is infuriating which makes the game the poor relative to the 8-bit versions.

TGM update 50%

COMMODORE 64/128 ■ PC

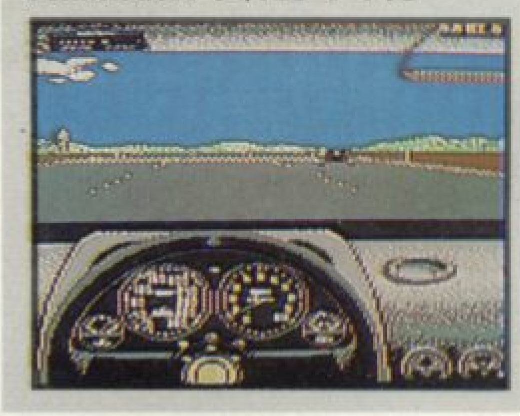
The Duel-Test Drive II

ACCOLADE Price TBA

Amiga 82% — TGM019

The race is on again, in Test Drive you had a choice of some pretty impressive cars, but now with The Duel — Test Drive II a Ferrari F40 and Porsche 959 are the choices on offer as you participate in one of the most exhilarating races around. But watch out for the smokies and other road users. The PC version is colourful, but the scrolling's a mite jerky. On the C64 control is slightly better, although the graphics are yer bog standard blocky affairs (nothing really startling there). But both games are at least playable, and that's the main thing.

TGM Update PC 64%
Commodore 64/128 74%



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To sleep, perchance to dream

WEIRD DREAMS

Firebird

Near exhaustion, you rest against a smooth wall, almost collapsing against it. Your breath comes hard and fast, your legs quiver weakly, and your pulse pounds relentlessly in your head; you try in vain to recall how long you have been here. How long you've been running.

An only too familiar high-pitched squeal cuts through your ears, but you can't tell from which direction it's coming. Pushing yourself away from the wall, you twist your head around, your brain seeming to thud against the inside of your forehead. You're unable to sense where the cry is coming from. But then it doesn't matter; the vast hulking body jumps out from a junction ahead of you, deep brown eyes with tint of red and a look of wild, insane aggression.

You run, as best you can now, somehow summoning the energy from somewhere. You hear the creature's harsh growling breath behind you, can almost smell its foul animal stench next to your skin, as you turn a corner, almost slipping on the smooth floor.

A dead end. White sheer walls on three sides. No way out, you glance back at the squat, furry creature, the prominent yellow teeth ending the pointed whiskered snout, the long snake-like tail. Nowhere to go, you run up against the wall ahead, claw at it, like the rat will claw at your skin. You crane your neck to look directly upwards, beyond the network of corridors, through the mesh... into the huge, frowning, bespectacled eyes of a giant man in a neatly pressed white coat.

With a jump of your heart, you wake screaming and thick with sweat, nervous, but relieved it was just a weird dream. Soon you'll be wheeled away from the safety of your hospital bed to the operating table, but surely, that's nothing to worry about?

The player guides his dreamland self while his body lies comatose. The figure, in a black and white harlequin suit, has the



Your body lies comatose as you guide your dreamland self through a series of adventures



Waking up on the operating table isn't a pleasant experience

general freedom of the dream scenes. Contact with hostile people, monsters or objects increases the heart rate, eventually leading to the loss of a life.

The surreal dreams, filled with outlandish creatures and mutated everyday objects, each require a different tactic to complete and don't have obvious playing strategies. The strength of the game is the unusualness, diversity and the strange ideas behind the dreams — and seeing a new one is a pleasure we won't spoil by describing them.

Unfortunately, the gameplay isn't so good. It's similar to *Dragon's Lair* in that it's exciting to view a dream the first time around, but then it's generally an annoying case of trying many different things till the solution's found. There's a sense of accomplishment when this is done, but afterwards there's no incentive to play the same dream again because its events don't change.

Weird Dreams is of value as a software

Let's twist again, like we did last summer

MIKE READ'S COMPUTER POP

Elite Systems

Though Mike Read's extensive knowledge of music hasn't personally been tapped to supply the questions in the game, it's designed to test your melodic mastery from A-ha to Yazoo. (First person to write in with the name of a band beginning with Z wins a free cornflake.)

Two players, or one versus the computer, select three team members from a board of portraits. Each face has an area of music associated with it; rock, rock 'n' roll, classical music, pop, country and western, or a mystery selection.

In the JUKEBOX round each team member picks a number from one to 12, revealing an icon for one of the six musical subjects. A question in that area scrolls by and four answers displayed, one of which is correct. As is the case with most rounds, a correct answer gains two points and incorrect ones pass to the other team for a possible bonus point.

Clues are given as to the identity of a mystery star in round two, but more points are earned if the question is answered before all three are viewed. In YOUR SCENE you choose an easy or hard question — easy is on the team member's specialised area, hard on any musical area. NAME THE YEAR is the same as round two except a year rather than a star has to be deduced.

Nine questions are tackled in 45 seconds in round five. Both sides play simultaneously beating one another to the answers, but a wrong reply automatically gives the opposition a point. (On the Spectrum, both sides get their own 45-second round, but two seconds are deducted for an incorrect answer.)

For the final round it's back to the Jukebox where the last six numbers are chosen.

It's blatantly obvious that this game is a simple rehash of Elite's other licensed quiz game, *A Question Of Sport*. The screen layout, control system and even round formats are all the same — only names and of course the questions have been altered. The computer itself is a pretty mean opponent and can soon be a bore, so really it's a two-player game.

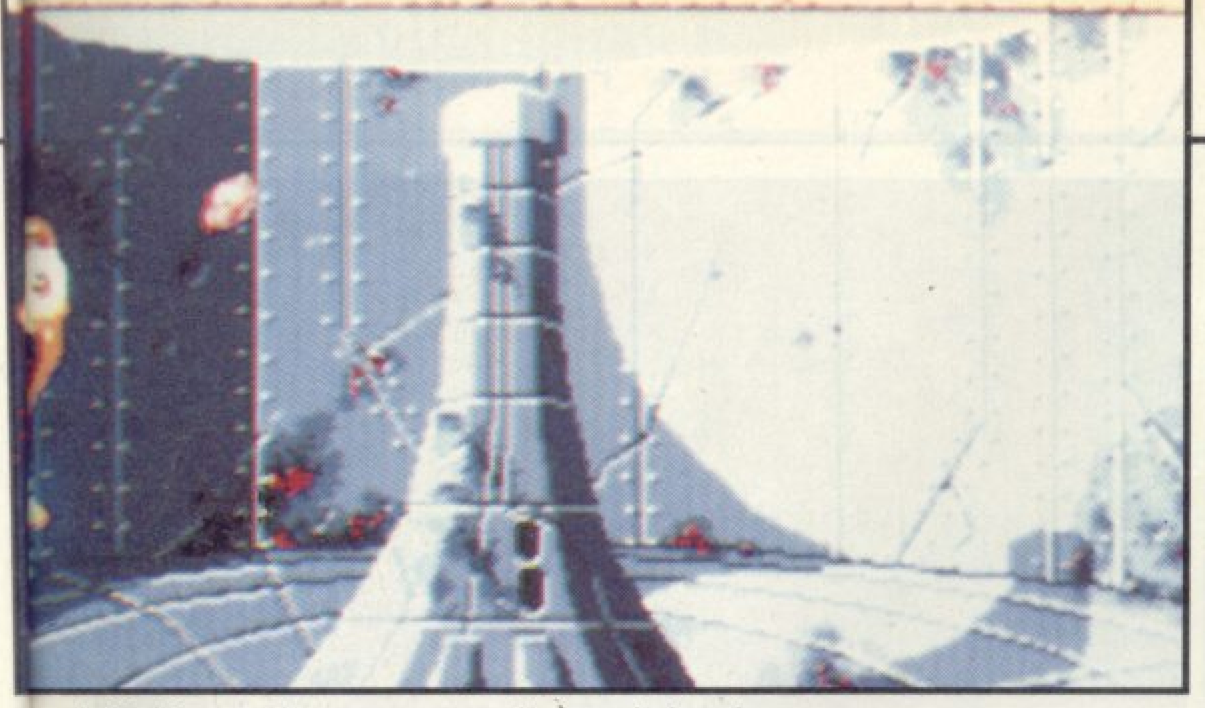
Warren Lapworth



SPECTRUM 56%

£7.99 cass, £11.99 disk

The portraits are nicely drawn but are of a fixed style so tend to get rather samey. The important displays (picture board, answer panel and so on) are squashed into a quite a small area towards the top of the screen, but clarity doesn't suffer too much.



Nightmares in space: your dreamer's head expands alarmingly whenever he gets a bump or a shock — and there are plenty...

curiosity — as a game it may have you tearing your hair out and yawning in turns — the sort of product to show friends and provoke quizzical frowns (and to show parents and teachers that computer games aren't all mindless violence). Innovative it may be, to a mild degree, unusual certainly, but a Star Player it ain't.
Warren Lapworth

OTHER FORMATS

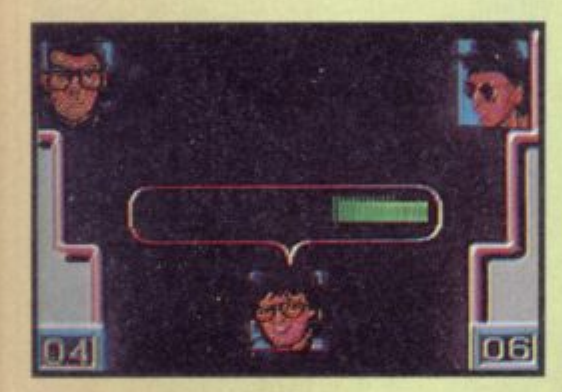
Commodore 64 (cass £14.99, disk £19.99) and PC (£24.99) to be released in July. Amiga (£24.99), Spectrum (cass £14.99, disk £16.99) and Amstrad CPC (C64 prices) to follow shortly afterward.

ATARI ST 64%

£24.99

An attractive mystical title screen, with the Easter Islands statue/chicken/frog combination creature, is a good indication of the graphics within the game, by Herman Serrano. The game's very atmospherically introduced: surgeons look down onto an operating table while a cardiograph runs along the bottom of the screen, then a pyjamaed figure spins upward into a swirl of blue clouds. In the game, animation is smooth all round, the main sprite walking realistically and casually, his head growing alarmingly when hurt. Audio is rather middle-of-the-road.

OP QUIZ



C64/128 58%

£9.99 cass, £11.99 disk

Clear bas-relief screen surrounds are lightened by the portraits which, though they're blocky (and Mike Read looks like he's wearing lipstick), are semi-caricatures of pop personalities, from Bono to Whitney. Title music and effects/jingles are jolly and fun.

AMIGA 57%

£19.99

Clear digitised portraits (of Elite staff) and screen surrounds are all there is to the graphics — the same as A Question Of Sport **except a different colour scheme (and Mike Read near-constantly grinning out at you instead of Dave Coleman). The twee between-round jingle is the same as** A Question Of Sport **and the title music is no better.**

OTHER FORMATS

Atari ST (£19.99) and Amstrad CPC (£9.99, £11.99) out now.

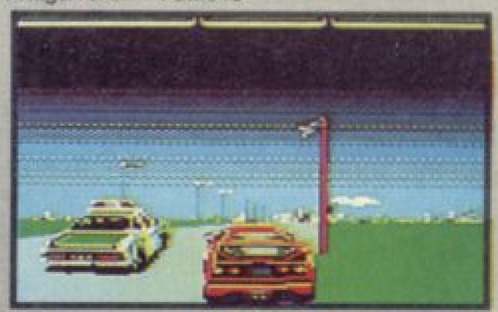
VERSION UPDATES

AMSTRAD CPC
H.A.T.E.
GREMLIN GRAPHICS £9.99cass, £14.99 disk
Spectrum 80% — TGM019



This looks and plays just the same as the Spectrum version. The frustrating zip you back a screen when you die feature is still present, but apart from that *H.A.T.E.* isn't too bad.
TGM Update 63%

AMSTRAD CPC
Crazy Cars II
TITUS £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk
Atari ST 82% — TGM016,
Amiga 79% — TGM019



The 16-bit versions received a reasonable reception. The Amstrad update is certainly colourful, and the going's just as tough because the coppers don't stop till they get their man. Of course this isn't as graphically impressive as the ST or Amiga games, but it still scores well on playability.
TGM Update 75%

PC
Red Storm Rising
MICROPROSE ■ £34.95
Commodore 64 86% — TGM012

World War III is under way, you play the skipper of a US nuclear attack submarine whose mission it is to kick some red asski. Based on the taut novel by Tom Clancy, the missions undertaken in *Red Storm Rising* closely follow developments in the book. The only difference being that this time the fate of the NATO countries is in your hands, fail too often and the Hammer and Sickle will be flying over Washington DC. The numerous missions to be undertaken are all up to MicroProse's usual high standards. Though the standard inch-thick instruction manual also rears its head, a quick thumb through is sufficient to shove you in the right direction, and from then on the action grabs and fails to let you go until you have single-handedly ended the conflict. A must for all arcade/strategy fans.
TGM update 85%

An encounter of a different, weird but sophisticated kind

KULT

Exxos

Bizarre and surrealistic, the world created in *Kult* provides an uneasy home for Normals — humans — after the inexplicable phenomenon called 'The Burn'. Their futures and fates are discretely controlled by Tuners — psi-mutants with strong telekinetic and telepathic powers who gain knowledge from the transmissions of Tuner Network Centres. Still, few can be smug the Powers That Be greatly frown upon anyone who dares to think!

Mutants aren't all the helpful organisers that the Tuners are, though. Protozorqs are a fanatically and dangerously religious race, particularly on their Day of Atonement. This year, they have descended upon Normal villages, devastating all they find and killing all but young males.

You take the role of a Tuner named Raven who, together with his girlfriend Sci-Fi, witnessed the massacre. Although Foetus, the intelligence of the Tuner Network, forbade it, Raven and Sci-Fi got involved in the fighting, and Raven battled till all the Prontozorqs lay dead. However, during the melee, Sci-Fi was dragged off to the Protozorq temple, and Raven cannot rest until he has rescued his true love.

Captured by the Protozorqs, there's only one way to escape — a way which should also allow him to find and free Sci-Fi. The Five Ordeals or tasks are attempted by many in order to gain spiritual enlightenment and oneness with the temporary god Deilos. As they involve exploring the temple, Sci-Fi could be found in the process.

Instructed on the first Ordeal by the Master of such things, you set off around the temple, its corridors and rooms shown in first-person isometric 3-D. A panel of icons is used in conjunction with a text area to play the game; the mouse pointer changes shape to indicate the function currently in use.

The icons allow objects to be taken, inventory checked, psi energy level shown, make Raven wait a while, check the time (you're playing against a time limit), and load or save games. Psi-powers are used after calling up a second strip of icons (see box).

Kult is certainly a lot different from the average icon and pointer-driven arcade adventure. The plot's strange and the people and objects found in the game are weirder still, while at the same time the playing system is sophisticated. As well as standard use of icons to perform actions, everything onscreen is named for you when pointed at, often giving rise to graphic and text displays to inform or worry, and sometimes summoning a curious biological device. By clicking on its eye-like protrusions, this allows more actions to be selected — often resulting in humorous text.

It's far from easy and lacks arcade sequences to lead you gently into the puzzles. Instead, it grabs you by the throat and puts a frown on your face as you try to complete the Ordeals and mini-tasks which are encountered in the temple's corridors. This won't find favour with out-and-out arcade fans, but most people should find themselves spending hours playing this novel and thought-provoking game.

Warren Lapworth



Exxos originality: rich textures and colouring make Kult *a weird but involving experience aided by the surreal plot and the sophisticated icon control*

£24.95



The originality of Exxos's graphics continues here, much in the Captain Blood and Purple Saturn Day style. A bio-mechanical look similar to Alien designer HR Giger's runs through the game. Main screen graphics are moody, generating a suitably surreal and arcane atmosphere, with neat cameo graphics sometimes overlayed to be later whisked offscreen by one of several clever graphic effects. The most notable sound feature is the curious language the other characters speak, but sampled spot effects have been well chosen. Alien burbles and a fittingly dramatic and mystical title tune mean that the soundtrack is almost up to the excellent polished standard of the graphics.

OTHER FORMATS

Amiga and PC (both £24.95) are set for late July release.

A TUNER'S PSI POWERS

Solar Eyes..........the ability to see clearly even in the blackest of caverns
Sticky Fingers...if the floor seems unattractive, Tuners can crawl over the walls and ceiling
Know Mind.........the average telepath's ability to read someone's mind
Brainwarp...........for a limited time, the selected victim becomes hopelessly stupid
Zone Scan..........things normally invisible become clear to the eye
Psi Shift...............move small objects by the power of the mind
EV...........................Extreme Violence! The tuner becomes temporarily psychotic and tears his selected victim apart!
Tune In..................links the mind with the centre of the Tuner Network, giving a clue to a problem

VERSION UPDATES

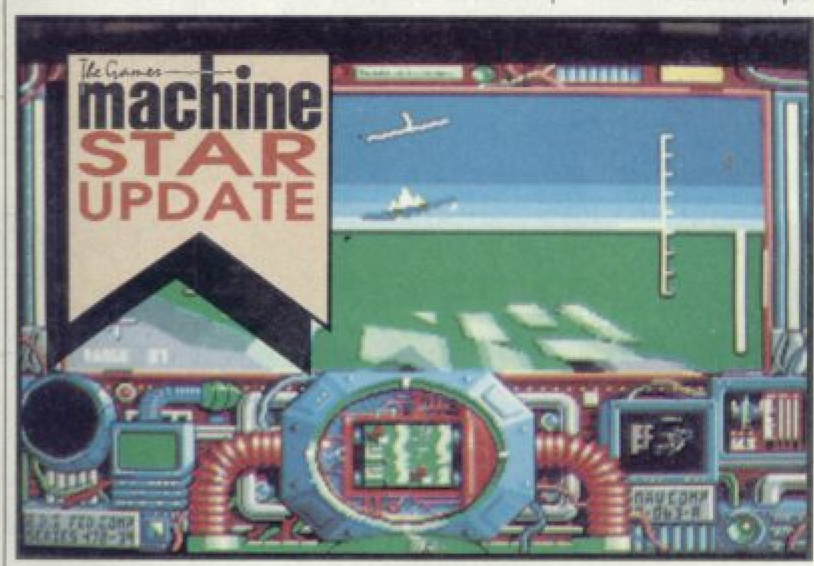
A triumphant return

FOFT

Gremlin Graphics ■ Amiga £29.99

Atari ST 44% — TGM017

How things change. The original ST form (the great disappointment of TGM017) didn't bode well for the Amiga version of what should have been the best game yet. But Gremlin have seen the light and rectified the one major fault with the original — the agonisingly slow pace of general movement through space. With the problem caused by an incorrect number determination controlling the number of ships to be encountered (and not helped by the very vague manual) ST *FOFT* simply fell flat on its face.



Now, with the one problem removed, FOFT can finally lay claim to the title of the best game ever (at least as the best space faring/combat game around — Elite proving a somewhat anti-climatic 16-bit release).

Next to no difference is to be found in the graphics, although the speed of flight is a considerable improvement. The other ships floating through the black ether now adopt different attack patterns and at least give you a chance to hit them; they may not stay still, but they're not insanely over the top in manoeuvrability.

Combat is at times quite sedate as you fight lesser rated spacecraft, but try taking on a Scooper or an Asp and you won't live to regret it. The graphics may not be of the highest 16-bit standard (what is?) but they work well within the space environment.

The drawn out planet sequence of the original has been considerably shortened in distance which makes the whole point of the planets that much more feasible and worth going down to even though the Amiga's extensive colour palette isn't used to any great degree.

The music is good across the board and Benn Dalglish's *FOFT* theme ties in well with the audio tape, but ultimately loses out in its raw power and atmosphere.

Now to the nitty gritty, once out into space *FOFT* performs in much the same way as Elite. Local jumps (timeskips in technical terms) may not be met by the artifical illusion of speed of stars rushing past, but planets draw near smoothly — an odd and unbelievably welcome sight to see after struggling to get anywhere in the endurance-testing ST *FOFT*. Gremlin have got it right with the Amiga version and *FOFT* is, to put no finer point on it, superb!

Robin Hogg

TGM update 93

ATARI ST UPDATES

For £1 Gremlin are now offering ST FOFT version 1 owners an upgrade based on the Amiga game changes which should solve the early problems.



Battlechess

INTERPLAY/ELECTRONIC ARTS
Atari ST £24.99
Amiga 83% — TGM012

Don't worry if you can't play conventional chess, because *Battlechess* is anything but. All the usual chess pieces are here (ie pawns, knights, rooks etc), but the big difference is that the 3-D figures move around the board and battle one another in often amusing detail. Watch out especially for the Monty Python And The Holy Grail-type punch up between two knights, and the .44 Magnum-and-bomb-wielding kings. Purists are admirably catered for with the 2-D game, but it's the 3-D battles which make *Battlechess* a great way to relax while at the same time kicking several shades of stars out of your friends.

TGM update 86%

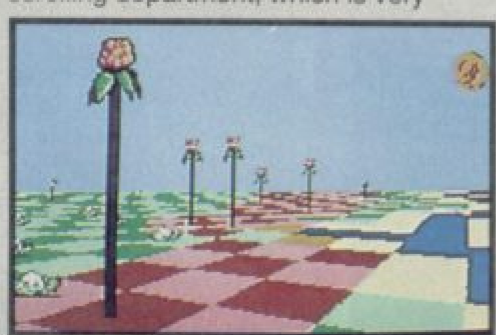


PC

Archipelagos

ASTRAL SOFTWARE/LOGOTRON
£24.99
Atari ST 90%, Amiga 90% — TGM019

Although this is as playable as the ST and Amiga versions, *Archipelagos* on the PC is a bit slow and juddery in the scrolling department, which is very



annoying when all of the stones have been destroyed and there are only 95 seconds to find the Obelisk. That said, the game's still a great one and the task to restore peace and harmony to the seemingly endless number of islands is certainly a tough one, but you wouldn't have taken the job if it was too easy would you?

TGM Update 85%

SPECTRUM ■ AMSTRAD CPC

Times Of Lore

MICROPROSE both £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
Commodore 64 73% — TGM014
Atari ST 59% — TGM016, PC 76% — TGM019

The search for Albareth's lost king continues with these two nicely done conversions. Well-drawn Spectrum introductory screens lead into neatly designed in-game graphics with colour carefully (if unimaginatively) used to avoid attribute clash. Initial static screens are weak on the Amstrad but on the whole the graphics are up to the colourful, lively standard of the C64 original — though blocky in places. The soothing Amstrad title music is the only notable audio. Both suffer with the same jerky scrolling problem as the earlier versions — distracting at first, but after a few plays the game becomes absorbing enough for this not to matter.

TGM update: Spectrum 73%
Amstrad CPC 71%

ATARI ST

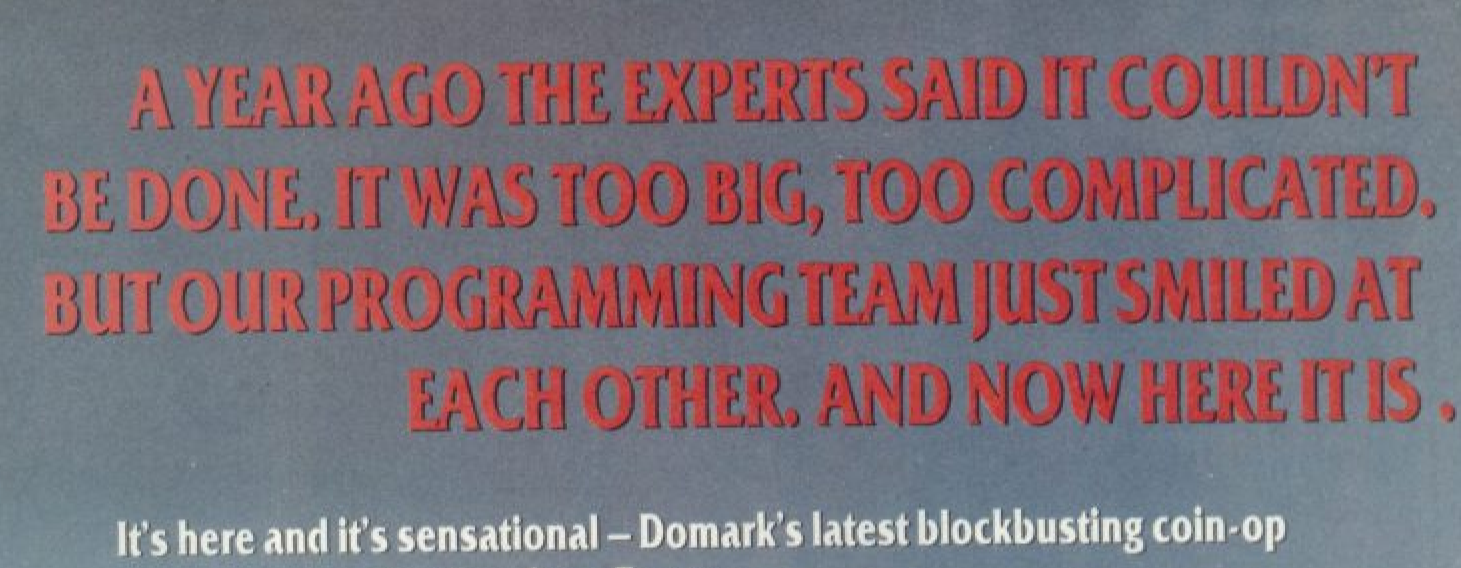
Dragon Ninja

IMAGINE £19.99
Spectrum 61%, Commodore 47%, Amstrad 63% — TGM017

With the 16-bit advantages Dragon Ninja is more impressive graphically than the 8-bit versions, with nicely drawn backdrops and some amusing detail (like Ocean posters...). Sprite movements are a great disappointment though. The scrolling's slow and juddery, control is infuriating and the gameplay is laggardly.

TGM update 49%

PRESS ANY KEY



It's here and it's sensational – Domark's latest blockbusting coin-op conversion from Tengen.

Join Major Rock Hardy and Captian Ace Gunn in their battle for supremacy against an army of invading Xybots!

With a split-screen for one or two players and a unique viewing area, you'll find Xybots a challenging strategic blast 'em up.

It's non-stop action all the way and working together in two-player mode is the ultimate fun. Each player controls one character and the split-screen gives each his own playing area. A map shows the section you're battling through and the positions of the patrolling Xybots. And to keep one step ahead, pick up energy pods, super weapons, keys and coins.

Xybots made a challenging arcade game . . . as a computer game it can't be matched. So grab hold of the controls and help the intrepid duo, Rock and Ace, rid the labyrinth of these metallic monsters!

XYBOTS

Coin-op screenshot

TENGEN

The New Name in Coin-Op Conversions.

XYBOTS



Atari ST screenshot

Atari ST screenshot

Atari ST screenshot

	Cass	Disk
Spectrum	£9.99	£14.99
Commodore	£9.99	£12.99
Amstrad	£9.99	£14.99
Amiga		£19.99
Atari ST		£19.99

Distributed by DOMARK

Ferry House, Lacy Road, London SW15 1PR 01-780-2224

Programmed by Teque Software Developments Ltd.

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The Games machine STAR PLAYER

Five - four - three - two - one.

THUNDERBIRDS

Grandslam

The year is 2063 — or 1964 if you want to be strictly accurate — and Thunderbirds are GO! Someone somewhere is calling International Rescue out from their sleepy south Pacific island and Gerry Anderson's Tracy family of puppets are on their way again.

Miners are trapped in a mine, an atomic sub is down, needed plans are locked in a bank vault and an international baddie is holding the Tracys to ransom. All in a day's work for Jeff tracy and his sons Scott, Virgil, Alan, Gordon and John (apparently when asked why John was shoved away on TB5, Gerry Anderson replied that it was a fitting place for the ugliest guy to be put).

Thunderbirds from Grandslam is the latest attempt to do Anderson's puppet creations justice (remember Firebird's attempt a few aeons back). This is a four-level arcade/strategy game which requires a fair bit of brain power to complete.

In Mine Menace two miners are trapped in a cage deep below the surface. Conventional rescue teams will take several hours to reach the scene, and to add to the disaster a valve on the mine's pumping gear is faulty so the mine's filling with water.

Alan, Virgil and 'Brains' head to the rescue, rummaging around the mine shafts solving clues which will save the trapped miners. Each character is separately controlled and must take two items from a choice of six with them into the mine: torch, lamp, laser cutting tool, bag of gob stoppers, klaxon and grease can.

Many of the puzzles can only be completed by a particular character and all of it against a downward ticking timer. Success is rewarded with a password so you don't have to keep starting with level one.

The Oceanic Star is a revolutionary atomic-powered submarine which has struck a mine while on tests. Now it teeters on the edge of an underwater volcano, its nuclear reactor threatening to go critical at any moment. Into this radioactive hell comes Alan and Gordon in TB4 to shut down the reactor and refloat the sub before it falls into the volcano and causes even more aggro. Another six items and the customary time limit apply.

Meanwhile British agents Lady Penelope and her long suffering manservant Parker are sneaking into the Bank of England to snaffle plans detailing the makers of the mine which sank the Oceanic Star. Penelope and Parker have to negotiate faulty lifts, an overzealous guard and a variety of security devices which need plenty of thought to bypass.

With their hands finally on the document, they discover the Hood (a nasty type with a bald dome and hypnotic gaze) is behind the dastardly scheme. They also discover that he took photos of the Thunderbird craft at the scene of the sub crash, and is holding International Rescue to ransom. He's threatening to explode a 60-megaton bomb if they don't pay £4 billion in three hours.

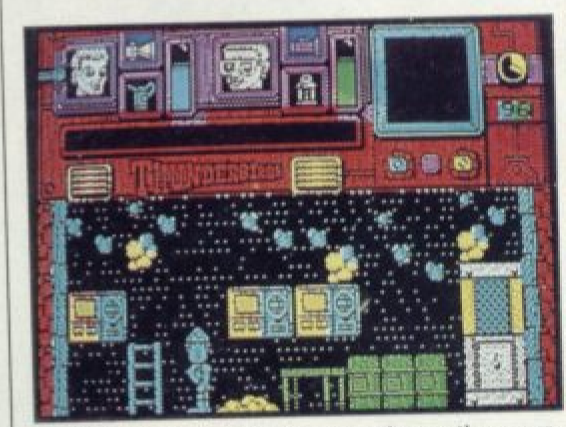
Scott and Virgil head for Arizona to battle the Hood and destroy his devilish bomb, but as always fiendish puzzles, a manic robot and the evil genius himself threaten the Tracys' plans.

Grandslam have done well at pixellating the TV puppets. The character sprites all move around the screen as amusingly as their supermarionated cousins, and the puzzles are satisfyingly complicated (especially on levels three and four), but not so difficult that you want to throw the computer out the window in frustration.

Mark Caswell



The Tracy family and 'Brains' (below in Spectrum version, others ST) snap to it in Grandslam's polished game





SPECTRUM 85%

£12.95 cass, £14.95 disk

Although not as colourful as the 16-Bit games, the Speccy version avoids colour clash admirably and plays just as well.

OTHER FORMATS

Commodore 64 and Amstrad CPC versions priced £12.95 cass, £14.95 disk will be available soon.

ATARI ST 87%

£24.95

Playability is the main consideration with any game, and although Thunderbirds takes a while to work out, it provides enough of a challenge to keep you playing. And its appearance helps enormously: graphically this game is very good, especially the digitised sequences at the start of the missions.

AMIGA 87%

£24.95

The shading on the Amiga version is a touch subtler than the ST game, and the International Rescue team stride around with equal determination.

Snot for the weakhearted

GILBERT – ESCAPE FROM DRILL

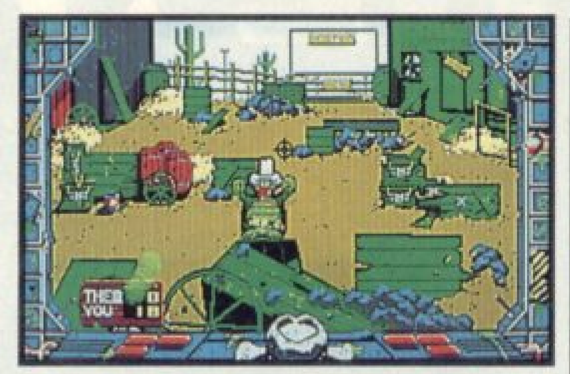
Enigma Variations/Again Again

What's large, green, very snotty and constantly rude to people? Yes, it has to be the self-proclaimed star of ITV's *Get Fresh*. Gilbert the disgusting has just finished the last episode of his TV series, Gilbert's Fridge, and has gone home to the planet Drill.

On his arrival, Gilbert constantly boasts of his Earth success — and his acquisition of a new contract awaiting his signature back on Earth. Sick of his continual mouthing, the Drillians hide vital parts of his ship (the toilet for starters). However, Drillians aren't really that nasty, so they promise to tell him where the parts are if he can beat them at their favourite arcade games. Trouble is, he's only got 24 hours to find the pieces before the contract goes to another megastar.

Gilbert can't refuse the challenge, and with snot in hand (or nose) he prepares to scour numerous locations on Drill. If he snots enough nasties on one screen a Hoverjelly appears, catching this causes various bits food to appear. Beans do the obvious and let Gilbert to float, while cake neutralises the beans' effect.

Gilbert occasionally comes across doors leading to arcade rooms where the Drillians' favourite games are played. There are five coin-ops: Brain Drain (a memory test), Sprout Wars (a fight to save sprouts from a nasty enemy), Greed (picking up money in a maze), Snotfight at the OK Corral (duck shoot-style snotting) and Earth Invaders (the aliens get their revenge).



Snot Fight at the OK Corral — Amiga

Gilbert plays against a fellow Drillian, if he wins he's given a clue to the whereabouts of a ship part, but fail and an hour's knocked off of his precious time limit.

It's strange that most TV games turn out like *Gilbert*. Loads of screens all looking similar and a few challenging subgames (remember *V*?). This is fine if the graphics and sound are great — and you're a fan — but without these assets addiction is severely limited.

Mark Caswell



£19.99

Although graphically better than the C64 version, gameplay's as difficult. Drawing a map is certainly the order of the day as Gilbert wanders aimlessly around... but perhaps younger Gilbert fans will enjoy it.



£19.99

With identical graphics to the Amiga version, the only real difference is the inclusion of several extra tunes, which seems odd; Enigma Variations may have done better putting them on the sonically superior Amiga.

C64/128
54%

£9.99 cass, £14.99 disk

Even Gilbert fans will find little excitement — that's if they can recognise Gilbert in the blocky graphics! The backgrounds are repetitive, with mundane tunes and sound effects adding little atmosphere or encouragement.

OTHER VERSIONS

Spectrum and Amstrad versions (£9.99 cass, £14.99 disk) are now available .

VERSION UPDATES

SPECTRUM ■ AMSTRAD CPC ■ ATARI ST

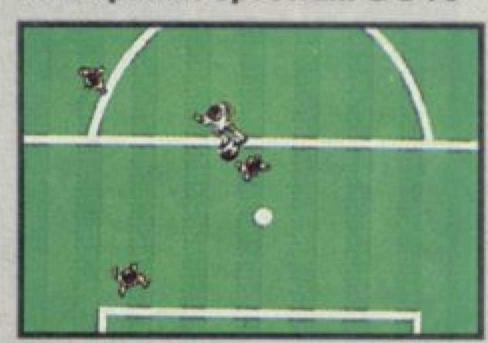
MicroProse Soccer

MicroProse ■ Spectrum £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, Amstrad £14.95 cass, £19.95 disk, Atari ST £24.95
Commodore 64/128 89% — TGM015

MicroProse Soccer is a bit more than most of its predecessors, and it proves very playable. Having both eleven-a-side and American rules soccer on one cassette/disk is a sensible idea bound to prolong lastability. The monochromatic Spectrum sprites (and the Amstrad game is virtually identical) thunder around the pitch in an amusing manner, and although the overhead view takes a while to get used to, control becomes second nature. The ball sprite works well too, with its shadow indicating height as well as position.

Things fall apart on the long-awaited ST version. Thin, colourless sprites lack the character of the C64 originals. They aren't as fleet-footed, and scrolling is slow and jerky There's a clear ST tone to the tunes and jingles, though they're good copies of Martin Galway's compositions.

TGM update: Spectrum 80%



Total Eclipse



MICROSTATUS AMIGA ■ ATARI ST £24.95
Spectrum 91%, Amstrad 92% — TGM014, Commodore 84% — TGM015

Incentive have licensed their third Freescape game to a new MicroProse label for its 16-bit release. An ancient Egyptian priest cursed the human race, saying that if ever the moon should cross the face of the sun and cause a solar eclipse the world would explode. For thousands of years the curse lay unfulfilled... until October 26 1930. Two hours remain till the total solar eclipse occurs and Earth ceases to exist. You are the brave explorer who has to enter the pyramid and solve the puzzles of the ancients and thus lift the curse.

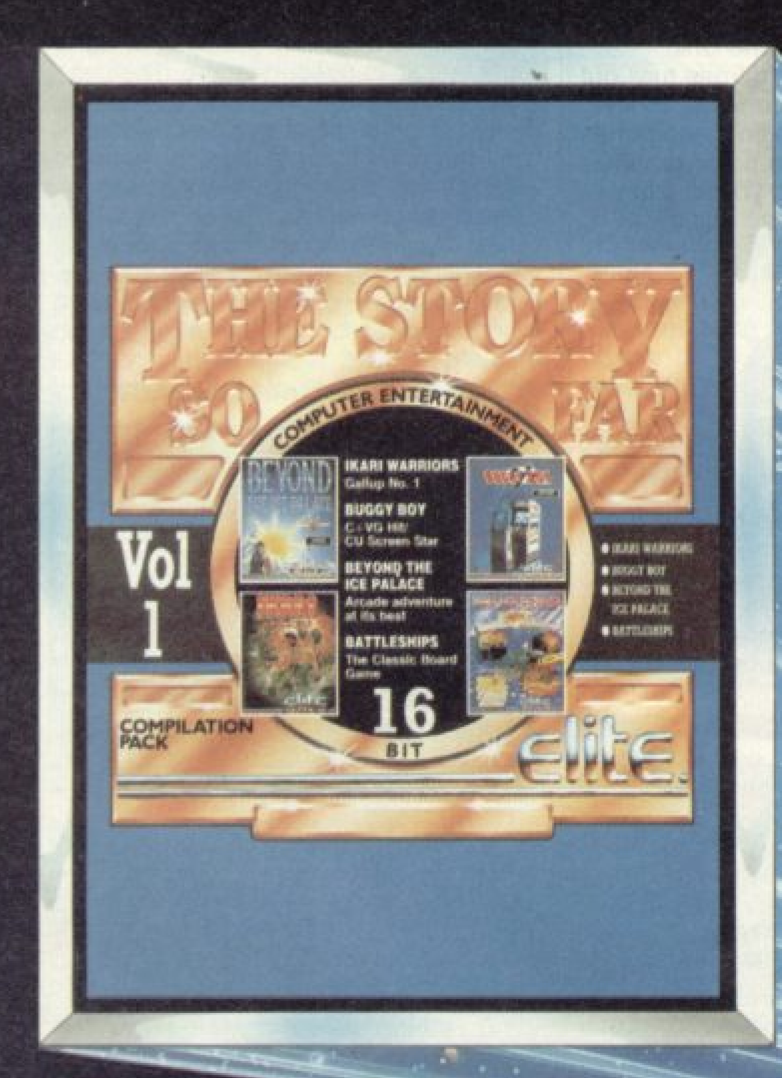
The 16-bit versions of *Total Eclipse* are just as playable as their 8-bit predecessors. Movement is fast and scrolling smooth as our brave hero falls foul of the various traps and pitfalls set to catch the unwary in this highly explorable 3-D world.

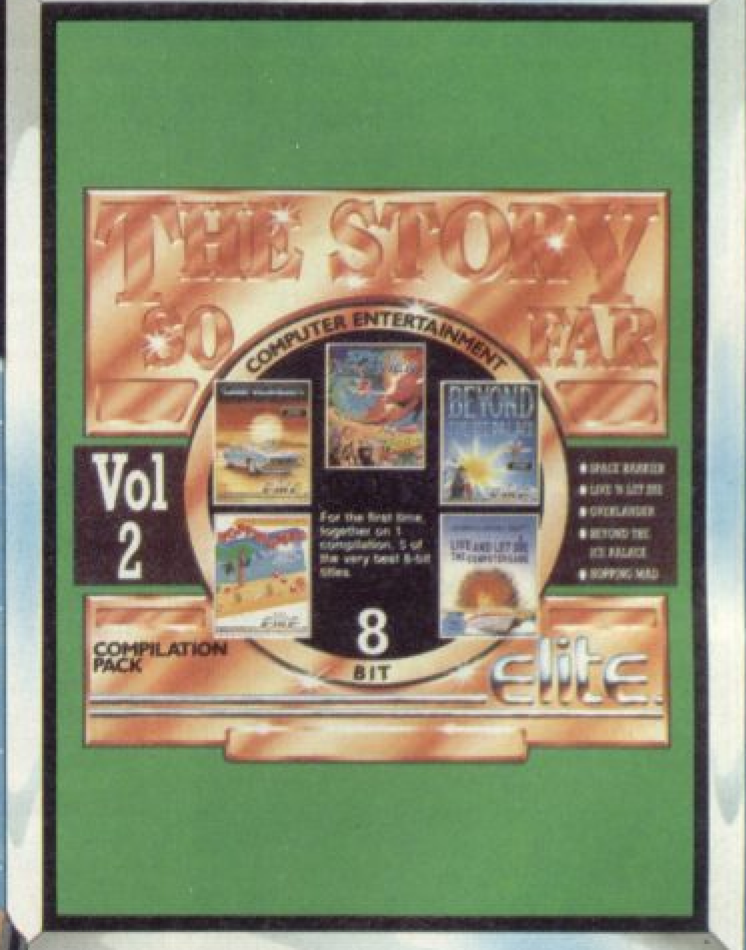
TGM update: Atari ST 92%, Amiga 92%



THE STORY

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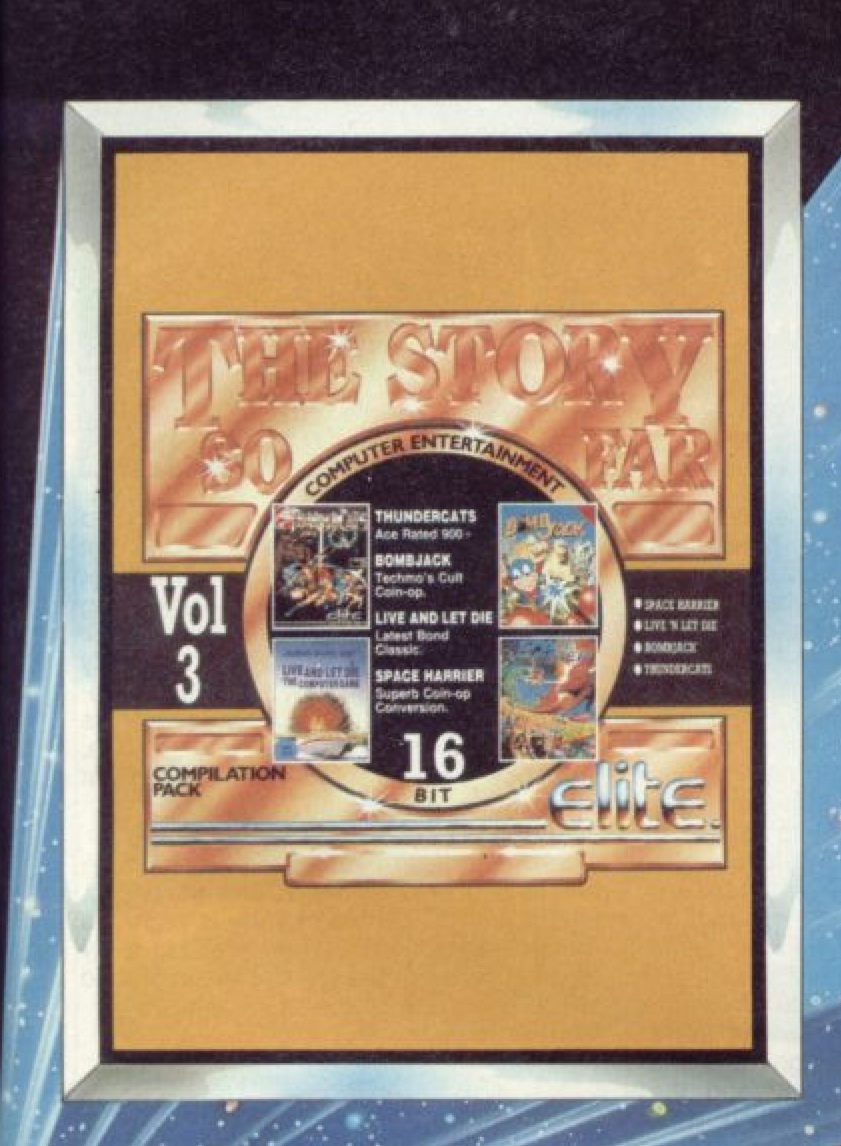
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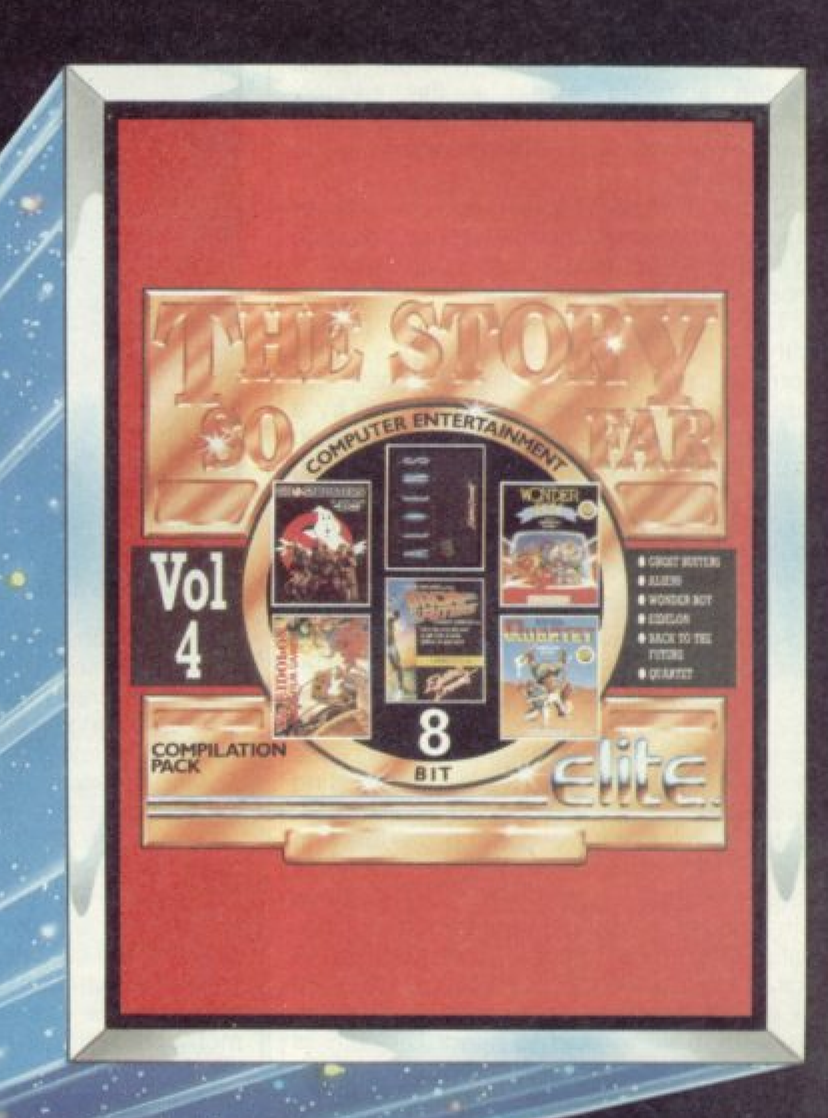
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The Story So Far . . .

SUMMER '89

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Roll up, roll up, for the greatest show on earth

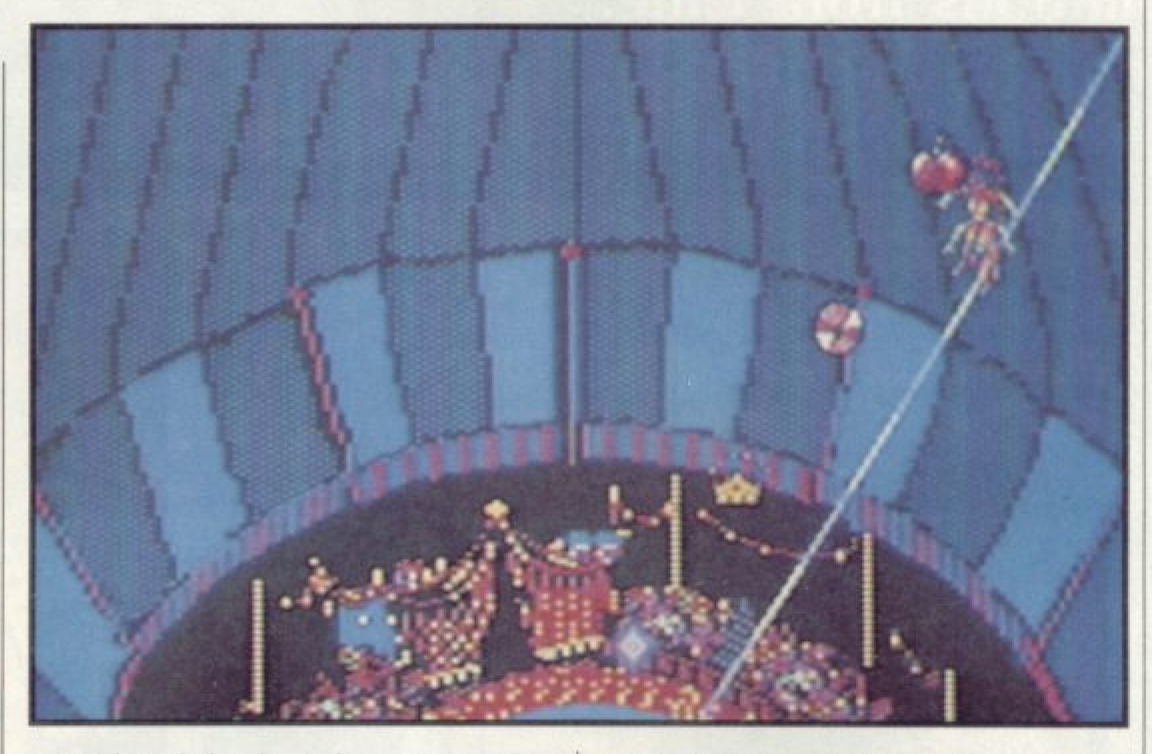
CIRCUS ATTRACTIONS

Golden Goblins/Rainbow Arts

Ah, those days of youth, visiting the circus with your parents. The big top, the ring master, the candy floss, the egotistical trapeze artists, the smell of greasepaint (the smell of the acrobats' sweat...), the vaguely amusing clowns, the bare-backed horse rider (often difficult to differentiate from the horse itself)...

Circus Director Morelli had the clever idea of arranging a circus acts competition to find the best performers in each of the most popular types of acts.

The series of five events, or acts, begins with trampolining. The aim: keep a clown bouncing and somersaulting and keep the audience amused; bore them (shown by a shrinking column) and they walk out on you. Bonus points are given for touching bonus balls which hover above the ring. Like all acts, there's a two-player option. In this case, the players' trampolines are set side by side.



Tightrope walking: avoiding a considerable fall and a broken neck seems like a good idea here — joystick directions alter the female walker's arm positions to retain her balance. Points are gained by jumping up to touch bonus balls, though of course thisincreases the worrying risk of losing balance.

If you think you've got the dexterity to become a really skillful juggler, you may soon change your mind — Circus Attractions lets you get your hands on more balls than most people can handle. A voluptuous assistant hands tennis balls, up to six, to a juggler sprite who is made to pass them from hand to hand. Difficulty is increased if a club is accepted, but much worse is a psychopathic clown biker with a predilection for mowing down jugglers!

Knife throwing is an opportunity for sadistic players to let off steam, for the targetting cursor allows more freedom of aim than just at the target. The target is a revolving circular board, onto which a gorgeous but obviously cretinous woman has allowed herself to be strapped. Knives are thrown between her arms, legs so on, but also onlooking clowns and acrobats can be maimed at leisure — hitting balls or clown dwarves gains bonus points.

Two see-saws and three men wearing make-up and bright clothes make up the literally named Jumping Clowns act. The see-saws are at either side of the ring, and the clowns are thrown through the air at one of three trajectory heights, to land safely at a vacant see-saw end. The act ends if a clown hits the sawdust, or touches a marauding ghost in mid-flight, or lands in the arms of another clown — they fall in love (sic) and forget about the circus.

Circus Attractions succeeds where in most ways Tynesoft's *Circus Games* failed (TGM016). The graphic design sets the right atmosphere straight away and the control system for each event works well. Though there are only five acts, they're a good balance. Jumping Clowns and Trapolining are both simple in concept but are also great fun to play, the control set just right to suit the action. Knife-throwing is equally as simple and easy to play till you try to land the knives close to the lady — and there's always other circus members to aim at to vary gameplay. Juggling's difficult but has its rewards with practice. Tightrope walking is least entertaining but by no means a disaster.

Fun to play on your own, *Circus Attractions* gets even better with two players adding to the laughs, and playability, particularly on certain events, is high. It's an original multievent game which is a ray of sunshine amongst the masses of cliched shoot-'em-ups and arcade adventures.

Warren Lapworth





£9.99 cass, £12.99 disk

Circus Attractions immediately gives a good impression with abright cartoon title screen and an up-beat jolly interpretation of the familiar circus theme. The standard doesn't drop within the game: though small, the sprites are neatly designed, colourful and often humorously animated. Although they're blocky, the larger circus figures of juggling are designed just as well, and backgrounds provide a nice, authentic setting. Sounds are unusual, bouncy but above all fitting to the wacky gameplay.

OTHER FORMATS

Atari ST, Amiga, and PC versions (all £19.99) should be available in the shops from around June 7 onwards.

MicroProse find 16-bit success with new labe

RVF HONDA

MicroStyle

To patriotic persons (of a mildly paranoid disposition) it's irritating that there hasn't been a decent UK motorcyclist racer (ie world champion) since Barry 'iron legs' Sheen more than ten years ago. Still, it was long after James Hunt's successful Formula 1 racing car career that Mansell came close to winning the four-wheeled world championship, so perhaps good fortune will come to those who wait. Digression ends...

In this racer, you sit astride a 750cc Honda RC30 and compete in the Clubman circuit championship. Winning this allows you to enter the National Championship. Being the victor at that level leads to the International Championship, then it's only the other competitors standing between you and the title of World Champion.

Entering your name to register, various options may be selected from a menu. Though initially they're empty, the tables for the championship, lap records, and all-riders (high-scores) may be viewed, and the history of the current rider. This gives the number of races started, crashed in, won, and number of lap records held.

The number of laps for the race are set and the track practised, if so desired, before getting down to the actual competition. Usual control convention applies (including the growing standard of gears changed with fire and up/down) and as well as other riders and tortuous bends, tracks have bumps, pools of water and oil spills to make racing tricky.

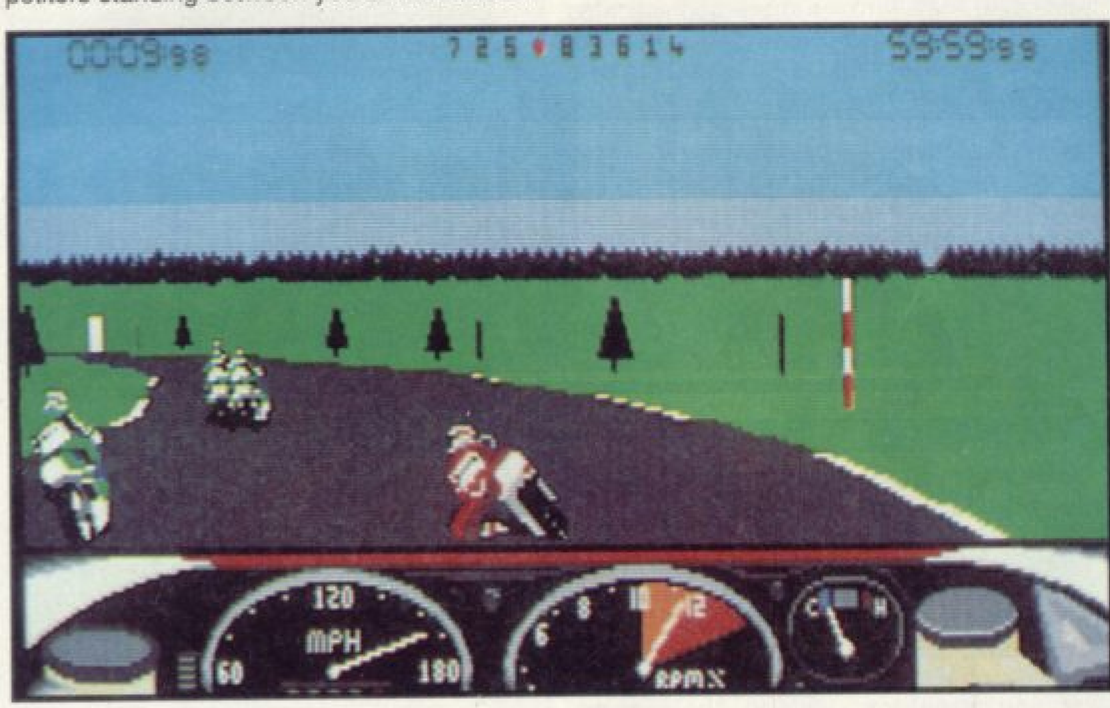
Some formats of *RVF Honda* (ST included) allow you to connect two computers with a datalink cable so two people can compete directly against one another, each using their own computer.

As you'd expect from a division of MicroProse, the manual for *RVF Honda* is meticulously detailed. Each race track has two pages to itself and the location and track diagrams are annotated with tips, statistics and section-by-section descriptions of the track's straights and bends. There's even a guide as to how professionals approach different types of bends, overtaking and motorcycle racing in general.

The gameplay hasn't been skimped on, either. The Honda isn't the rough 'n' ready cycle featured in most games; it's much more sensitive and requires more skill. At first, it's very easy to go skidding off at a corner or from a puddle of water or oil. Finishing in the top five is ambitious enough for a novice — forget about winning till you've got plenty of experience.

Focussing on 16-bits, MicroStyle have a quality first release with more to it than the usual mindless arcade racing games — a must for fans of the genre.

Warren Lapworth





£24.95

Polished presentation leads to realisitic track perspective and animation, but spoiled by giant dark green lollipops for trees and signs seemingly made of cardboard. The main sprites are much better. The well defined and animated rider occasionally looks over his shoulder as he races along. Best though is when you leave him after a crash — he stands by the side of his bike, shaking his head and occasionally reaching over to rev the engine! The engine is the most noteworthy sound in the game: it's loud, grating and soon gets on your nerves.

OTHER FORMATS

Amiga and PC (ST price) should be available as you read this (which seems like a stock phrase for the formats box this issue).

VERSION UPDATES

COMMODORE 64/128 ■ SPECTRUM

Silkworm

VIRGIN GAMES both £9.99 cass £14.99 disk
Amiga 86%, Atari ST 83% — TGM 017

This 11-level shoot-'em-up in which an evil dictator is terrifying a peaceful country was well received a couple of issues back. The C64 *Silkworm* is certainly tough, even seasoned blasters will find the going difficult, but this is a good blast that whilst it suffers slightly from the Commodore's blocky graphics, is very playable. The Spectrum's largely monochrome works well with huge sprites and satisfying explosions. perhaps a touch easier to get through, it's still one of thgose games to go back to.

TGM update C64/128 75%
Spectrum 77%

ATARI ST ■ SPECTRUM

The Running Man

GRANDSLAM £24.95, Spec £8.95/£12.95 disk
Amiga 53% — TGM019

Sad to say the ST version plays just as badly as the Amiga game. Control of



Richards is sluggish. When running he looks as if he's struggling through a vat of treacle. Things improve a little on the Spectrum version (picture above), character control of the reasonably detailed sprite is slightly better, making it easier to get on. But it's still the basic game concept which lets all the versions down.

TGM update: Atari ST 51%
Spectrum 60%

AMSTRAD CPC

Emlyn Hughes International Soccer

AUDIOGENIC £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
Commodore 64 88%,
Spectrum 85% — TGM017

Strangely, in the actual matches (menus are the same clear simplicity of the other versions), the side borders have been increased in size so that the playing area is a square shape in the middle of the screen. With less pitch and less players visible at any one time, playability suffers a little, but the control system works fine. The players are rectangular and hop and skip about the pitch, and sound effects are thin, but this, with its wealth of options and control complexities, is still a very good soccer game.

TGM update 81%

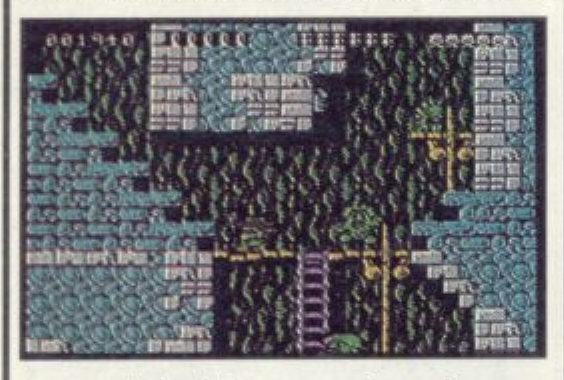
A leaping, bounding blast from the pas

RICK DANGEROUS

Firebird

All the best gung-ho swash-buckling adventurers were around in the roaring mid-Forties. Complete with numerous women throwing themselves at their feet, irremovable hat and sharp line in witty dialogue, they knew how to handle themselves in a crisis. Though rather more jovial than the average Nazi-beating hunk, Rick Dangerous is one such hero.

1945. With a taste for exploration, Rick went in search of the lost South American Goolu tribe. Unfortunately, while piloting his plane he got over-involved in carving his name in a block of wood with his teeth and



so crash-landed near the Amazon. Surviving the crash (without a scratch, obviously), he was unenamoured to find the Goolu tribe were somewhat less than pleased to see him.

Thoughtfully grabbing a large stick on the way, Rick ran for the safety of a huge cavernous temple. This is where you take up the fortunes of Mr Dangerous.

It was, of course, the Goolus' temple, but the spear-wielding weirdos are only part of the problem. The temple is armed to the teeth (if large stone religious buildings can be so described) with all manner of mean and sneaky traps, beginning with a man-sized boulder chasing Ricky (sound familiar?) and preventing him from going back the way he came.

Spikes, hidden spears, pits and disintegrating floors are just a few of the nasty obstacles abundant amongst the platforms and ladders of the flick-screen temple caverns. To help him, Ricky has a gun, with a limited supply of bullets which thankfully can be replenished, sticks of dynamite (also limited in number) to blow away blocking rocks, and the aforementioned stick to probe for traps.

After the Goolu temple has been conquered, there are three other levels to tackle, the next set in a pyramid where a stolen priceless jewel must be found.

Rick Dangerous is a platform game in the style of the *Super Mario Bros* underground world, with a short hero sprite bounding around a fun cartoon setting. Though it's not as playable as the classic Nintendo game, it's amusing and fairly addictive. Play is made more sophisticated by the positioning of traps, rocks and features such as moving platforms, composing puzzles on some of the 85 screens.

Rick Dangerous is a hark back to the old days of gaming — by no means a bad thing in this case — and will provide lots of entertainment for your money.

Warren Lapworth



£9.99 cass, £14.99 disk

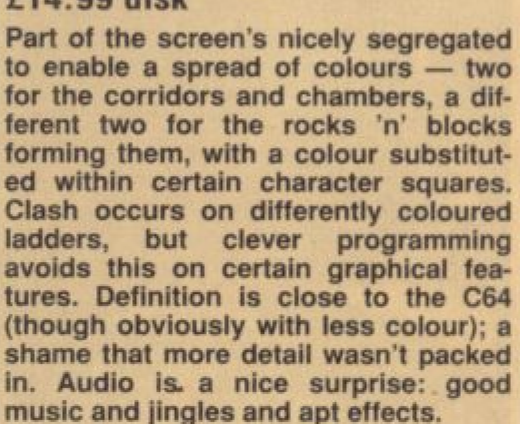
A neat film strip graphic accompanies introductory text. The sprites are small but detailed and designed with humour; the backgrounds are well drawn, producing a good stone effect without falling into the trap of blandly repeating blocks of graphics. When killed, characters fall in front of the screen graphics, waving their arms and legs madly which adds a lot to the game's feel. Sound effects are drab but the title music is a great jaunty number.



AMSTRAD 76%

£9.£99 cass, £14.99 disk

Colourful but blocky, the graphics aren't of the same quality as the C64 version: the characters generally look a bit grim, while the screen goes from one part of a level to the next by scrolling scenes jerkily. Audio is equally crude. Gameplay, though, remains intact, which with Rick Dangerous **is the main thing.**



SPECTRUM 78%

£9.99 cass, £14.99 disk

Part of the screen's nicely segregated to enable a spread of colours — two for the corridors and chambers, a different two for the rocks 'n' blocks forming them, with a colour substituted within certain character squares. Clash occurs on differently coloured ladders, but clever programming avoids this on certain graphical features. Definition is close to the C64 (though obviously with less colour); a shame that more detail wasn't packed in. Audio is a nice surprise: good music and jingles and apt effects.

OTHER FORMATS

Atari ST, Amiga and PC (all £24.99), each with 135 screens, will be available.

Sentinel

FIREBIRD ■ PC £24.95
Amiga 94% — TGM009

Mega Commodore hit of years ago, *Sentinel* is a classic game which seems to work on every format, and the PC is no exception. The object in question rules over 10,000 worlds. You play a lowly Synthoid who attempts to overthrow The Sentinel through a series of enegry absorptions from trees in the 3-D landscape which allow you to recreate yourself ever nearer and on higher ground to ruling sentinel clones. Eventually, when enough power is absorbed you can tackle the clone control a world — but they're out to get you first.

TGM Update 85%




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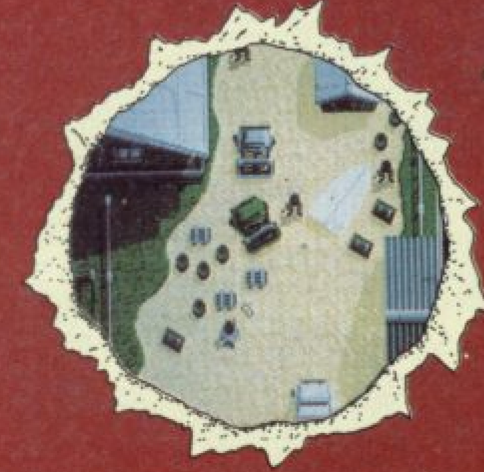
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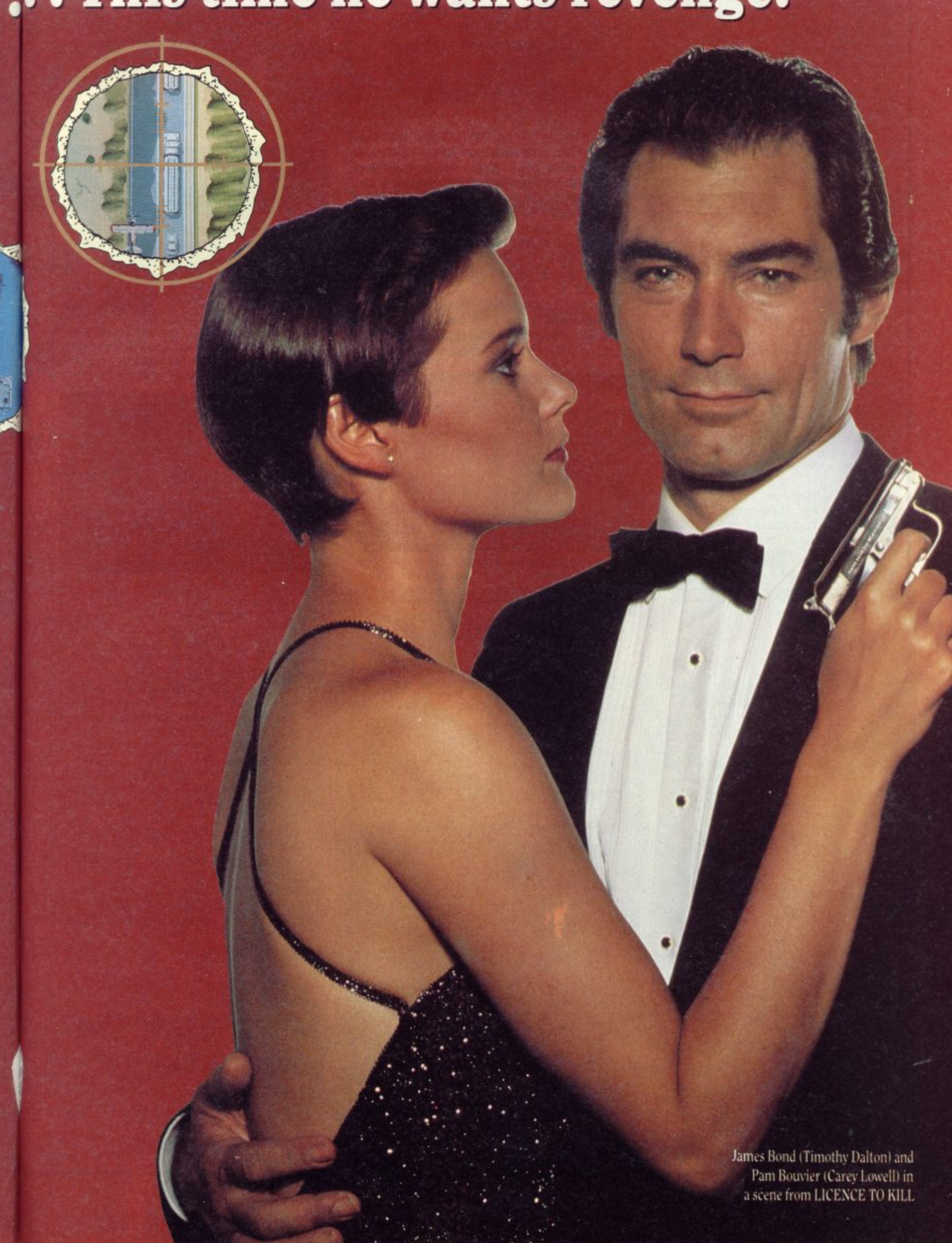


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... This time he wants revenge.



James Bond (Timothy Dalton) and Pam Bouvier (Carey Lowell) in a scene from LICENCE TO KILL

VERSION UPDATES

AMIGA
Gunship
MICROPROSE £24.95
PC 81% — TGM004, Atari ST 85% — TGM005, Amstrad 81% — TGM011

In the AH-64 Apachi combat chopper you can kick hell out of a variety of targets with the awesome arsenal at your disposal. As with many MicroProse simulations, game control takes a while to master , and once the chopper's off of the ground, sad to say, Amiga *Gunship* isn't very impressive. Scrolling is on the jerky side and neither the graphics nor the sound use the Amiga's capabilities to the full.

TGM update 68%

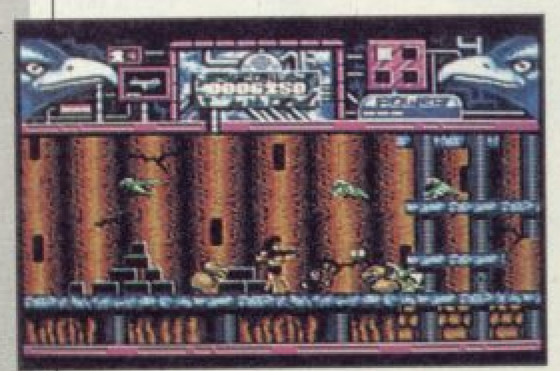
AMIGA
Hawkeye
THALAMUS ■ £19.99
Commodore 64 80% — TGM009

The Boys Without Brains came up trumps with the C64 version of *Hawkeye*, and it has survived the transition to 16-bit well. The hero of the game strides around firing his little gun at all and sundry in a very menacing manner. The shoot-'em-up market has seen a lot of examples of this type of game over the years, and when it arrived on the C64 a year ago it was pretty state-of-the-art. Now on the Amiga it isn't as startling and the conversion hasn't produced top-of-the-range graphics or parallel scrolling, but it does remain a damned good blast.

TGM update 81%

SOFTW

Software Snax is TGM's section for those reviews that come in too late for the main section, those which we just missed out on last time round because of schedule timing, or are not what you would call mainstream games, such as the brilliant CDS Colossus Chess 10 on the Atari ST. We're also running Electronic Arts' Legacy of the Ancients here, because the game was released some time ago and is now effectively being re-released as a 16-bit budget game.



16-bit Hawkeye

S.T.A.G.
EAS £24.99 ■ Amiga

Earth's been destroyed and the surviving members of the human race have fled into space to try to contact friendly aliens for trading.

The game starts with a password quiz: find the relevant word on a certain page and type it in. Once achieved, the playscreen is displayed, consisting of a central area where graphical representations of alien traders are shown, flanked by the options used throughout the game to buy and sell stock and equipment, check



your stock, look at the galactic map and your status (you start as a beginner, the aim of the game is to reach the highest ranks).

First buy some stock with your meagre funds. The local Arfur Daley-type alien dealer appears and offers a variety of goodies for sale. These include water, software, alcohol, weapons and — for teetotal races — milk. You can barter with these guys to get the best deals, and when a mutually beneficial deal's been struck a galactic map appears.

Travel range — dependent on fuel types — is shown by a green circle. A quick click on the flight icon sees you wending your merry way to your destination — but watch out for pirates who will half-inch your cargo given half a chance.

It all sounds rather like *Elite*, though sadly it lacks the long term playability of that classic game. Some of the text messages are on the slow side, and certainly grow to be teeth-gratingly annoying when experienced for the Nth time. **MC**

TGM rating 68%

Vindicators

The Games machine STAR UPDATE

DOMARK ■ Amiga £19.99
Atari ST 88%, Amstrad 89% — TGM018

This is a story of vile aliens, brave Earth defence pilots and some cracking graphics and sound effects. The arcade machine is not the most awe-inspiring creation the world has ever seen, but this Amiga conversion is very good. The bright colourful SR-88 Battle Tanks rumble around the screen as if they mean serious buisiness, aided by some pretty impressive sound effects. A great buy — get it.

TGM Update 89%



ANDROMEDA MISSION
Demonware ■ Amiga £tba

Bizarre green and multilimbed alien races just don't know when to put their seven-toed feet up and stay at home. Another nasty bunch has decided to gather their

ARE SNAX



considerable army to form an invasion fleet and see what innocent worlds they can conquer.

One such world is Andromeda, the last outpost of a civilisation fleeing from a dying solar system. It and its moons have been overrun by alien craft and even now are setting up bases from which to spread their corrupt species. Naturally, you have the task of cleaning up space. Steering a ship across the surface of 3-D perspective landscapes and also in space, extra weapons can be gained — but precious shield energy can only too easily be lost.

The multicoloured patchwork landscape scrolls smoothly and quickly, but perspective is unrealistic near the sides and horizon. Ship movement is plotted smoothly but definition is flat. The sound effects are a strange bunch of samples, including inappropriate richocheting six-shooter fire as a laser sound and a couple of Star Trek effects.

Andromeda Mission is little more than an updated *Buck Rogers* game — graphical presentation is better and the in-vogue add-on weaponry and large end-of-level motherships have been included. The difficulty level is unfair: enemies approach en masse, spraying bullets all over the shop, and the aforementioned motherships are very difficult to destroy — but are easy to be destroyed by. Shoot-'em-up fans have a lot of games to choose from, so needn't choose this. **WL**

TGM rating 46%

WAYNE GRETZKY'S HOCKEY

BETHESDA SOFTWORKS ■ AMIGA £24.99

Ice Hockey is a violent sport, so it's creditable that this release echoes the fact. As for product endorser Wayne Gretzky, you would have to know the trans-Atlantic sport well to appreciate his particular qualities.

From three types of menu — Game Setup, Time Out and Team Construction — options include type of play (whether you want to play and/or coach the team), team quality level which in effect acts as a difficulty level, whether or not to view the punch ups which inevitably occur and choice of strip colour.

Then it's onto the ice rink to bust some shins. Only one player on each team can be controlled at one time — denoted by a white helmet. To change players simply move the onscreen cursor to the chosen character and press fire. When the opposing side (or computer in one-player mode) get control of the puck, don't panic, you have a stick use it.

There are several ways to regain possession of the puck. One way is to barge into the opposing team member as he passes, with luck this dislodges the puck, or you could try to grab the dude, which

Bestride the chequered boar

COLOSSUS CHESS 10

CDS ■ Atari ST

Chess is a computer natural, the most rewarding computerised board game for the solo player, and CDS have been in the forefront of computer chess since the earliest Spectrum days, when one of the first versions of the *Colossus* series came out.

This ST version is an outstanding program (by Martin Bryant), not only for is inherent chess-playing abilities, but also for all the bells and whistles which have been added — for a start you can choose to play with onscreen messages in English, French, German, Italian or Spanish... Chess, after all, is international.

Colossus 10, like a few of its earlier versions, offers a 3-D display for verisimilitude, but it can be switched to a two-dimensional view which adds clarity to the thinking process at times. And from the drop down menus a rich array of options is available (including CDS adverts for forthcoming games), such as playing blindfold (obscure either or both of the players' pieces), change the settings of the board/pieces or even change the pieces themselves. So great fun can be had choosing between standard, futuristic, medieval and oriental figures.

The program also features real games as played by chess masters against each other and computers, adding a touch of wargaming whereby you may be able to rewrite history so that Karpov can win that game he played against Mephisto III in 1983 which ended in a draw.

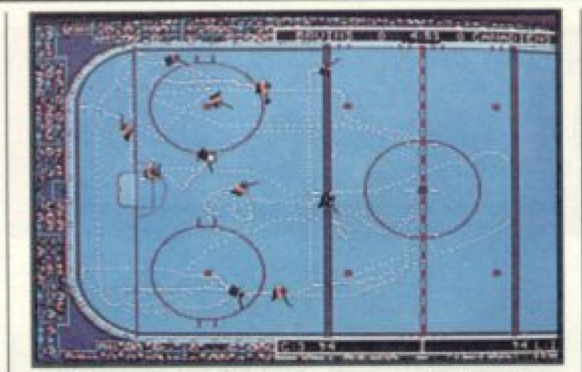
The 40-page manual assumes more than a passing acquaintance with the rules of chess, but is accessible enough for beginners and explains all the features that have become standards on computer chess programs. *Colossus 10* tops the lot, however, with its unique learning ability which makes it an increasingly tougher opponent the more games you play — and chess has an indefinite lasting appeal... **RK**

TGM rating 86%





won't gain you the puck but will allow your team mates to swarm around. When a puck handler is molested there's a good chance of a fight breaking out and/or a penalty being awarded, though try not to lose too many players to penalties because this obviously gives the opposing team the upper hand.



Wayne Gretzky's Hockey certainly has enough menus to keep you scratching your head for a few hours deciding what and who to play where. The actual game is also a bit difficult because player control is rather tricky. Good for ice hockey fans, others might approach with caution. **MC**

TGM Rating 75%

DEMON STALKERS – THE RAID ON DOOMFANE

Electronic Arts ■ PC £19.99

The ultimate enemy in this game, Calvrak, is a particularly ugly beast who threatens the kingdom from the safety of his/its 100-level dungeon — Doomfane. What's more, this vast underground fortress is filled with various forms of vile and violent creatures, all under the power of Calvrak.

To prevent the potentially disastrous situation of Calvrak sending forth his army, one or two players may infiltrate the dungeon. Maze-like levels are shown from a bird's-eye viewpoint and the monsters encountered in the corridors are dealt with by fired weapons. Useful objects to be found include keys, treasure, three types of food (to restore health) and magical amulets (to increase armour, strength and magic levels).



Often tasteless colour schemes are excusable amongst amusing and puzzling action

Included with the game is a construction kit with a host of editing abilities, enabling dungeon levels to be created or existing ones altered.

Colourful EGAintroductory pictures lead to disappointment — maze graphics are simple and drab; sprites have vague detail and two-frame animation. As is often the case with slower PCs, scrolling is jerky. The usual ear-grating PC sound effects are partially compensated for by sampled (though noisy) pop title music.

Demon Stalkers is a clear variation on *Gauntlet*, though it expands on the classic coin-op with information scrolls (giving hints on what to do next), different qualities of food, and multilevel puzzles. More thought is required than for *Gauntlet* (reviewed in TGM011 — 72%) and though the game format is getting tired, *Demon Stalkers* is worth a look, particularly with the ability to define your own dungeons. **WL**

TGM rating 71%

BRIAN CLOUGH'S FOOTBALL FORTUNES

CDS Software ■ Atari ST £19.99

No, this isn't a limp soccer manager or *International Soccer* with the famous loud-mouthed manager thrown on the packaging for good measure, as seems to be the case with some football games (if not most) personality-promoted software. In fact, it isn't even directly computer based at all: a real, tactile playing board (coo) is the most important part of the packaging of this 16-bit revamp of a two-year-old Spectrum game.

For two to five players, each managing a team of players (13-man squad) whose names, positions and skill ratings are supplied on small cards, progress is made around the board, with the computer acting as a dice, and special squares are landed upon which change the team's fate. The results of many of these happenings are chosen at random by the computer. The results of matches, which occur in-between board moves, are determined logically by the computer by comparing team skills and history.

It's no surprise that graphics are kept to a minimum when all the computer has to do is display randomly chosen text and manipulate a few numbers. Neatly presented text, with splashes of colour here and there, are the norm, with a simply drawn dice and printer being the underwhelming highlights. One or two bleeps punctuate the silence.

Thankfully, the board game is quite an amusing one to play and assembling a skilled squad soon becomes an involving pursuit. The game borrows a few ideas from *Monopoly* — for example, Immunity cards to counteract penalty squares are the equivalent of 'get out of jail free' — and wild auctions, where bidding for a good player can go stupidly high, are great fun. A lot more of a board game than a computer one, *Brian Clough's Football Fortunes* will appeal to football fans and casual kick-about players alike. **WL**

TGM rating 75%

LEGACY OF THE ANCIENTS

Electronic Arts ■ PC £9.99

Legacy of the Ancients is part of the Electronic Arts Software Classics range; basically 'golden oldies' at budget prices. This means that the cliched outdated play can be excused — *Ultima V*, the latest of the series from Origin, has greater sophistication of combat, magic and communication but costs three times as much.

Your sedate and simple life as a shepherd changed when you found a dead body, with a strange black disk, some papers, a gold bracelet... and a leather scroll.

Little did you know that the scroll — said to hold the magical secrets of 12 ancient wizards — had been stolen from the Galactic Museum some years ago and had since passed from hand to hand, leaving death and chaos in its wake. Beginning in the musuem, your quest is to find a way to eliminate the scroll's evil magical influence.

The game uses the standard RPG formu-



A dangerous quest — luckily you've got a talking bracelet to keep you informed!

la. Your character has five attributes (STRENGTH, ENDURANCE, DEXTERITY, INTELLIGENCE and CHARM, all of which begin at 15) plus HIT POINTS and LEVEL. A plan view of your surrounding area is shown (sometimes changing to 3-D perspective) and 12 commands are available.

Graphics are drawn with strange pastel colours, at times soothing at others gaudy. Definition is vague — outdoor figures are podgy doughmen and walk in an uncoordinated way. The walls of the museum and dungeons are stipple shaded crudely and unattractively but some of the creatures encountered are amusingly weird. Scrolling/screen update is done in big steps but this is par for the course in the RPG genre.

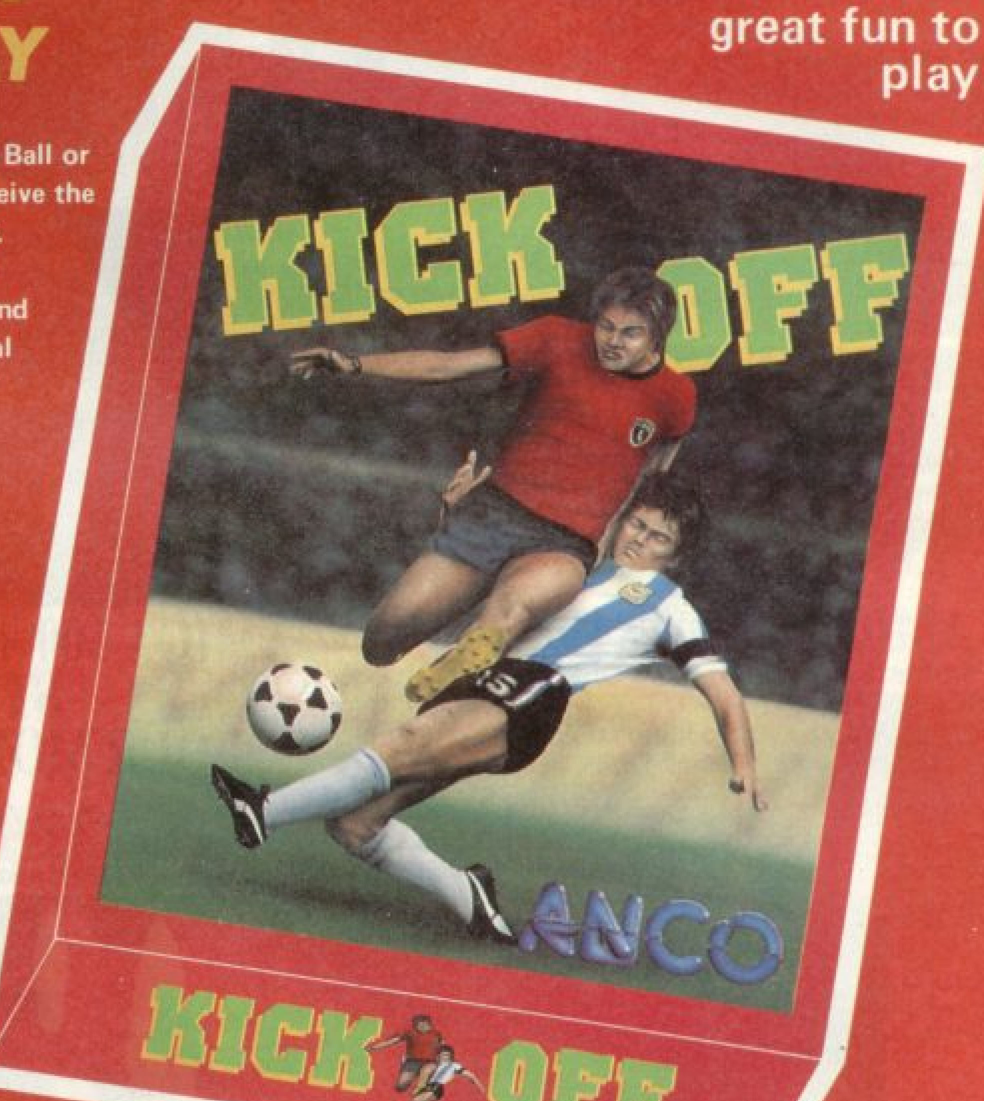
Certainly an RPG beginner would benefit from *Legacy of the Ancients* and the more experienced (and frugal) can still find a few hours of fun in the novel scenario. **WL**

TGM rating 73%

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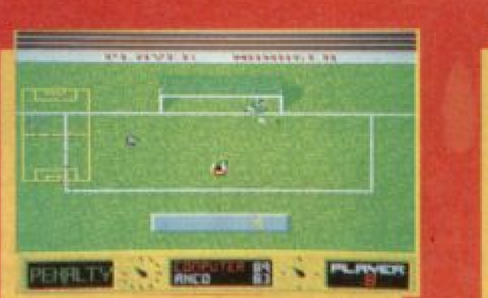
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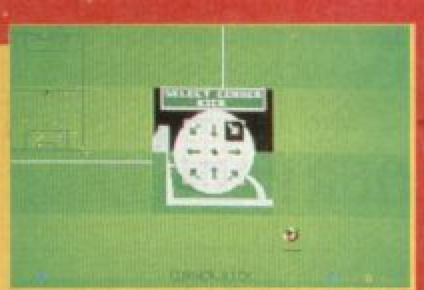
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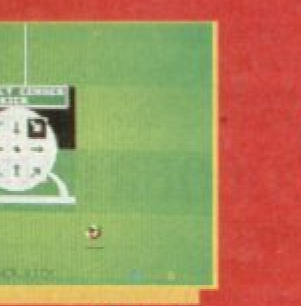
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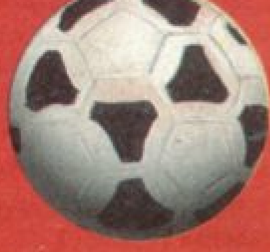


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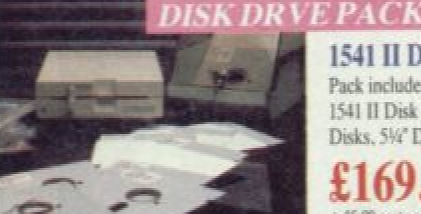
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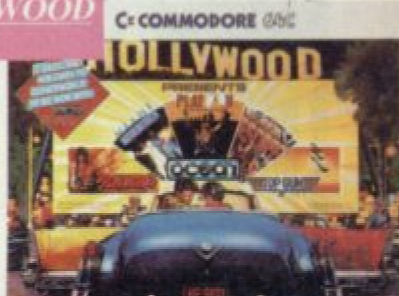


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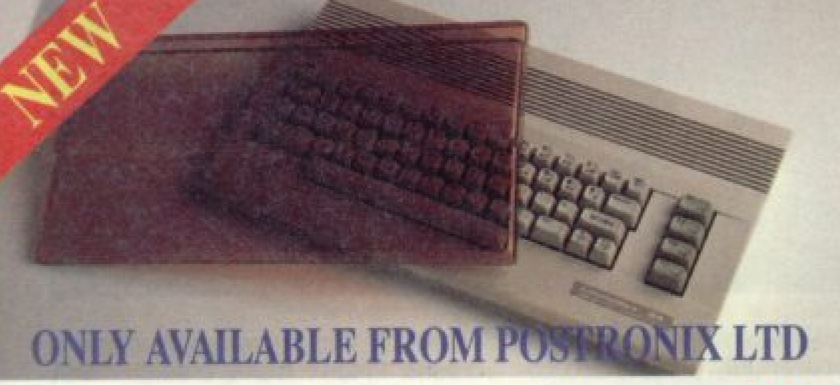
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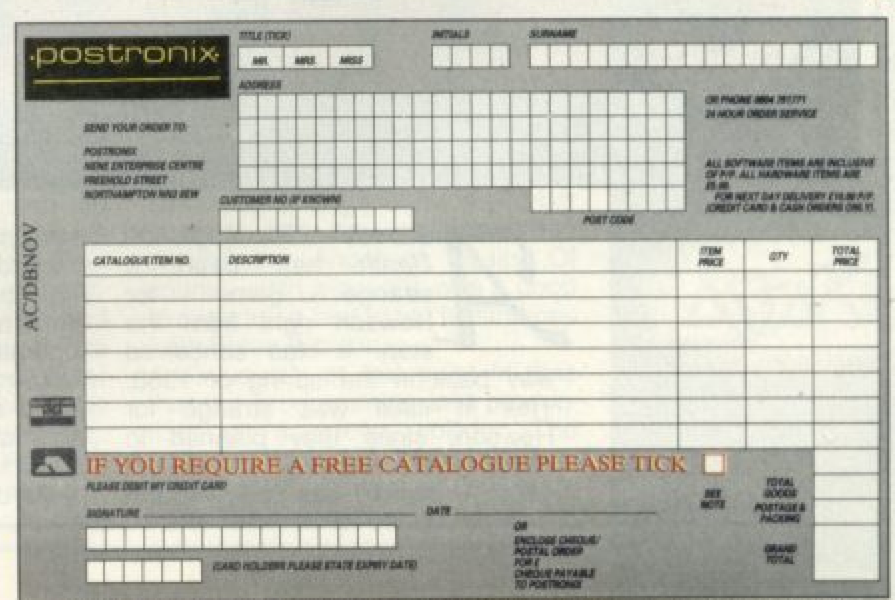


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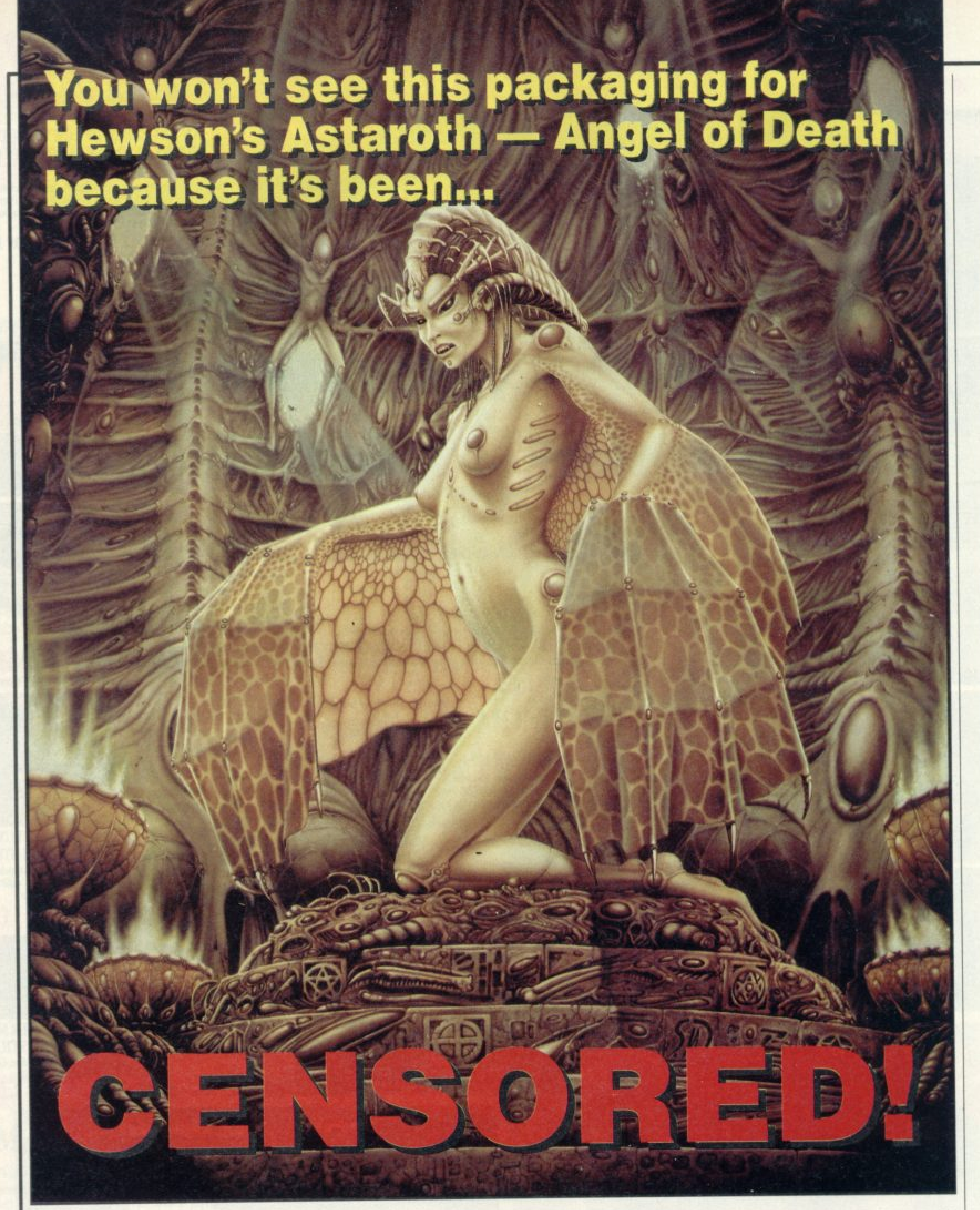
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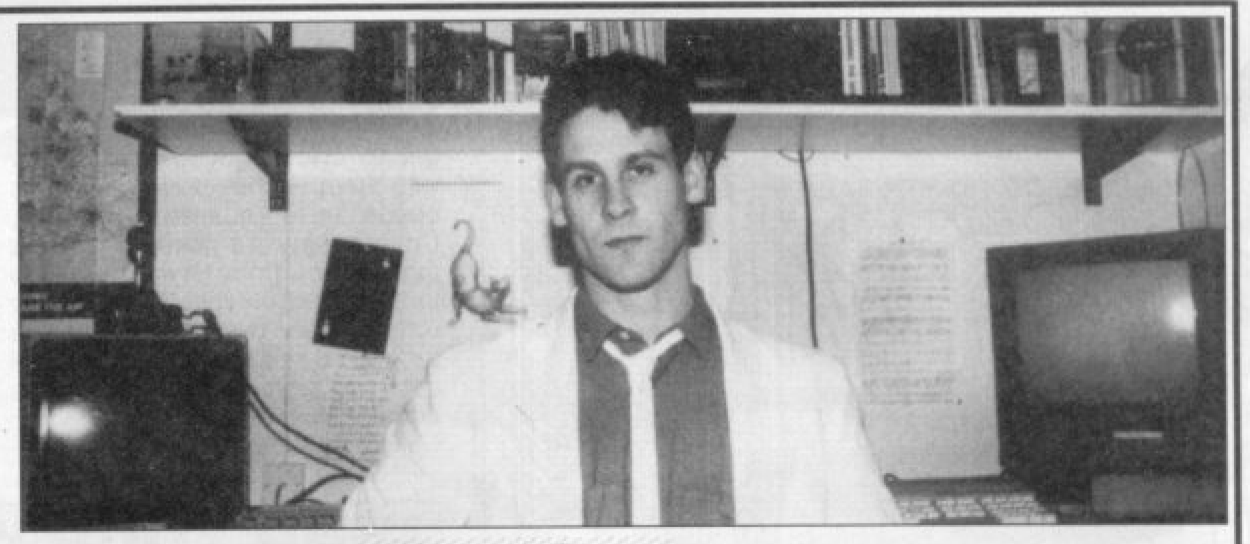
You won't see this packaging for Hewson's Astaroth — Angel of Death because it's been...

CENSORED!

Astaroth — The Angel Of Death has been a strange game for Hewson right from the start. It was conceived way back in the spring of 1988. This in itself was strange for Hewson, since they planned to release it a over a year later in April 1989 — which, due to 'programming problems', has now been put back to nearer July (which, according to Hewson, is 'not bad'). Sandra Cousins, Hewson's then Operations Manager, was already flaunting the artwork for the packaging at last year's PC Show — and that was another problem: the artwork.

Marc Dawson (who already had *Robin Of The Wood* and *Nodes Of Yesod* to his credit) first approached the eponymous Andrew Hewson at the PCW Show in 1987, asking if he could do any work for Hewson — who were releasing such hits as *Exolon* and *Zynaps* at the time. After discussion, Marc was commissioned to write *Astaroth* — one of Hewson's





first games to be programmed primarily on the ST and Amiga.

As soon as the game was placed on the release schedule, Sandra Cousins got her operation into the theatre, and started managing the game that Hewson hoped would be their best-seller of 1989. First thing on Sandra's agenda was her own personal favourite: the artwork. The now General Manager, who's been with the Abingdon-based software company as far back as she can remember, currently has two artists on her books. Nick Davies, who did the *Stormlord* artwork and is currently producing all the 'touched up' Rack-It covers; and the *Astaroth* artist, Steve Weston, who has previously produced masterpieces for *Eliminator*, *Exolon* and *Nebulus*.



Sandra Cousens (top left), *Astaroth* author Marc Dawson (above) and in suitably lugubrious mood, Steve Weston (left) with some other of his Hewson creations

Below: a mock-up of the actual packaging for*Astaroth*, sanitized for public consumption

Sandra Cousins explains: 'Once I'd chosen Steve to do the artwork, we met and discussed what the cover should look like. I usually have a good idea of what I want, so it's just a case of ironing out any difficulties. Sometimes the programmers get a look at the game, just to get some detail, but with *Astaroth* it wasn't necessary. We had already developed the Angel Of Death, and I knew what she looked like. The overall mood was dark, damp and quiet — quite menacing in fact.'

Steve went away to plan out a few rough sketches of the figure, and returned to Hewson's HQ for the go-ahead to produce a full and finished picture. 'Steve had got what I wanted immediately — although, obviously, the first sketch had to be changed a bit,' says Cousins, with a Mary Whitehouse look.

With the sketches finished Steve decided that to do such a masterpiece as was required by Hewson, he needed inspiration from far away — Spain. 'Steve went on holiday to Spain, and finished it in a retreat he's got in the mountains.' The Angel of Death took Steve Weston twice his normal time to complete, 'it didn't matter because the game wasn't anywhere near finished then. We paid a lot for her (the Angel of Death) and she's just what I wanted — seductive, yet frightening.'

Hewson have always been very proud of the artwork they produce, but why such a startling change from the impressive images of *Eliminator* and *Zynaps* (which was also 'a bit naughty')? 'No more spaceships! They've been pushed aside now. We're always trying to find something original. Originality is the key. I found out a lot about different types marketing while I was in the States, they're so much ahead of us. It's also good to look at other markets.'

Hewson's next summer compilation, entitled *Heatwave*, takes its inspiration from postcards. Created by Nick Davies, it features another scantily-clad, sun-soaked female relaxing on the beach next to a large octopus who carries the compilation's games in each tentacle. 'Nick and I just sat down, threw a few ideas on the table and came up with this... Nice isn't it?' says Cousins presenting the eye-catching artwork.

While Sandra is coping with the artwork, somewhere in the bowels of Hewson's offices Paul Chamberlain is hard at work getting the programming going and polishing up all aspects of the game. Programmers are seen or summoned on a regular basis (Hewson only use freelancers). Software Managers like Paul are often the scourge of programmers, but it is SMs' suggestions that make the games the highly-polished products they are today. It's impossible for a programmer to view a game impartially (he is often more impressed with his two-pixel scroll than the game content), the SM looks at the game from the buyer's perspective — and therefore needs a good band of playtesters around him. As Software Manager, Paul Chamberlain also has the deep knowledge of the game that is required to write the instructions.

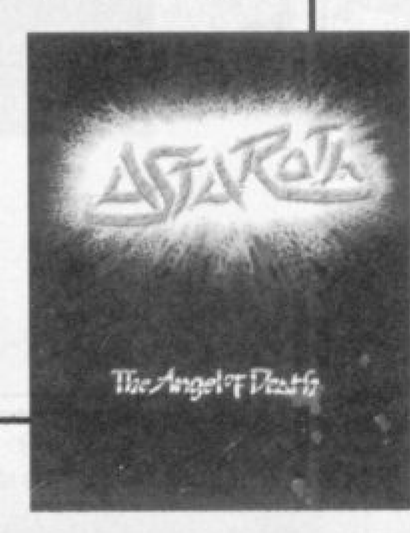
Scenarios, on the other hand, are a different matter entirely. Usually, all the background information is written by Sandra Cousins, however, *Astaroth* proved to be the exception. Sandra felt that it required a novella as it was going to be a 'special game'. An outside writer was commissioned to write a story which could roughly follow the plot of *Carrie* — Stephen King is Marc Dawson's favourite author, and King's book was what inspired him to write a game around the Angel of Death. Of course, such a novella was a good excuse for a few more illustrations from Steve Weston...

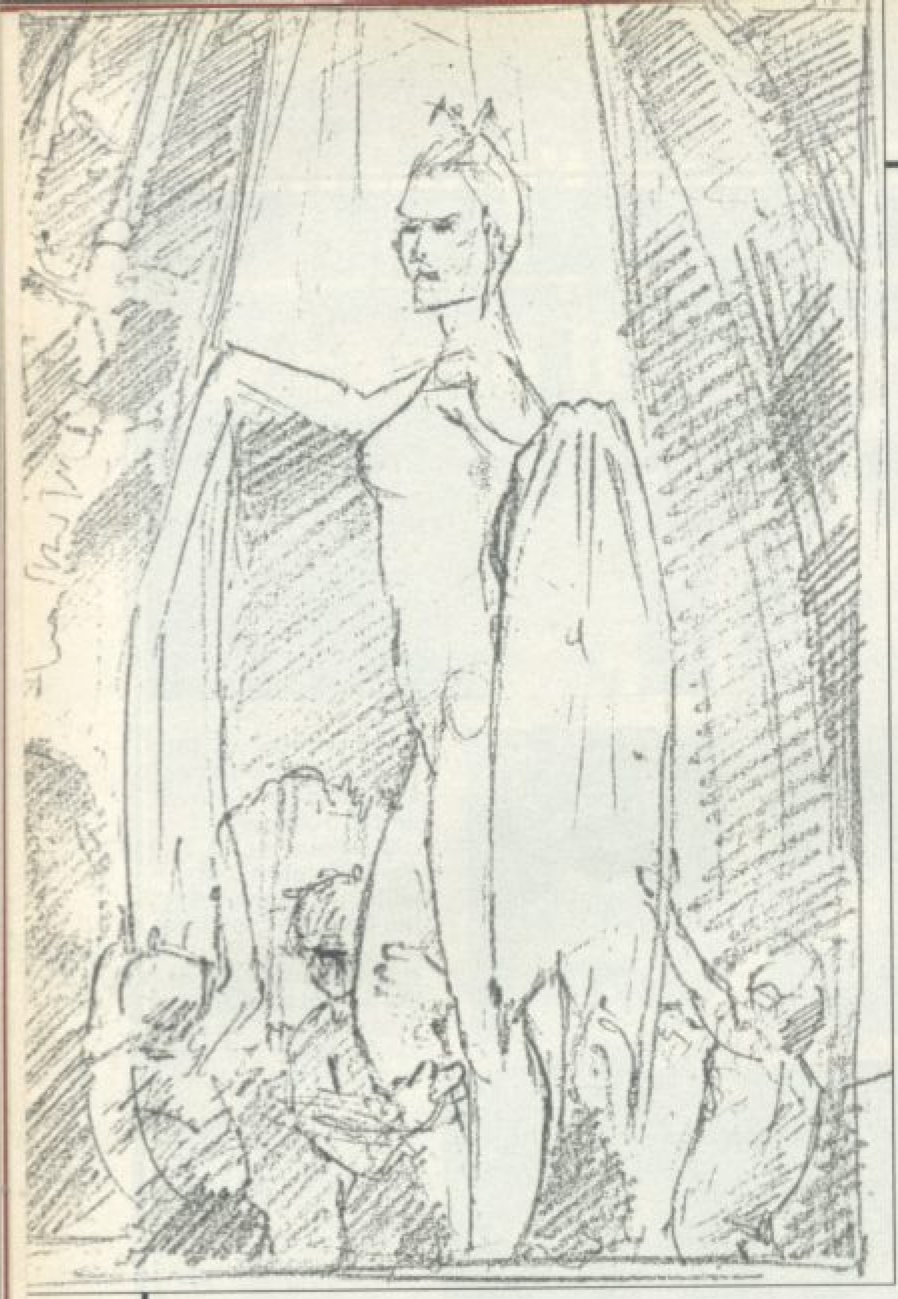
It's usually at this point in time that the programming and production of a game collide. The Software Manager has a finished game (well a running demo to show the distributors, at least), the

CENSORED

Astaroth isn't the only game to have its artwork changed for the shelves, here are a few others whose packaging was chamged..

GAME OVER (Dinamic) — an offending nipple was censored.
FRIDAY THE 13TH (Domark) — the knife was removed for John Menzies.
BARBARIAN (Palace) — Maria Whittaker was not to be seen in Boots, only the barbarian.
VIXEN (Martech) — only Corrine Russell's face was to be seen in Boots.
And of course **Astaroth**





scenario is written, the artwork is drawn and the rest — bar duplication — is up the the publicist.

Hewson's policy is not to release games unless they're totally happy with them — they prefer quality as opposed to quantity. However, Cousins says it's possible to get a master tape from Hewson's HQ to the shelves of your local retailer within three days just to hit a scheduled release date — 'but it'll cost you an arm and a leg!' she adds.

And that's normally where it finishes for General Manager Cousins, but not so with *Astaroth*... On presentation to the major retailers, Hewson were told that the high street chains wouldn't stock the product with the present artwork. Sandra reckons the picture's 'naughty', but the ban was totally unexpected: 'They looked at it totally out of context. The buyers for the retailers are acting as public censors.' But 'it's publicity', she adds. And, any publicity's good... isn't it?

MIND YOUR WAY

Astaroth is the Angel of Death: mistress of all minds and the guardian of evil. As Ozymandias, a fearless chap, you must trek through countless rooms in a labyrinthine structure filled with numerous hordes of strange and weird folk. They'll bash you at the slightest provocation, so be careful where you stand! Your only weapon against these fearless foes is your mind — a very powerful asset. With mind-concocted magic you must overcome the demons and collect various Mind Powers, which will eventually be used to battle with the Angel of Death in the apocalyptic last room.

Astaroth should be out — Tastefully repackaged — in July on the Amiga and Atari ST, priced £24.99.

One of Steve Weston's preliminary sketches for the *Astaroth* cover, which suggests in noteform on the sides that the light should all come from the top and be blue-green in colour. The structural elements should be blue-brown-gunmetal, but with a fish-like luminosity. Overall, he adds at the bottom, the mood should be dark, damp, quiet.

PICTURE THIS!

A fantastic video recorder and posters up for grabs



You've read the feature, seen the artwork, now win the book that inspired *Astaroth*, the game and the poster.

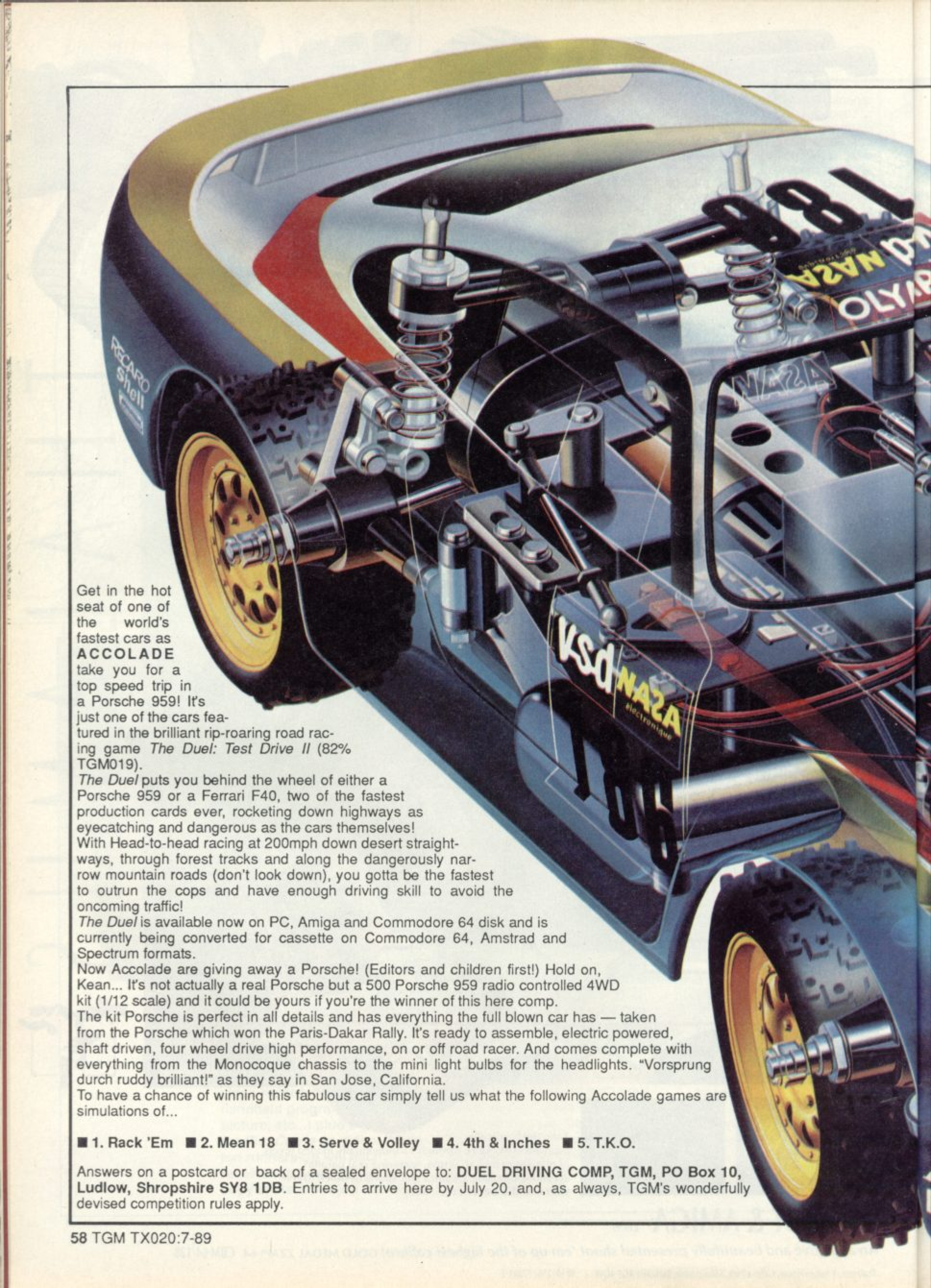
The Angel of Death, Astaroth's main character, was based on Stephen King's horror novel, *Carrie*. The first-prize winner will receive a terrific Amstrad video recorder (featuring handheld programming, HQ picture, etc...) plus a copy of the film *Carrie* on video. While ten runners-up will each receive the book *Carrie*, a copy of *Astaroth* (on the ST or Amiga, or any other Hewson 8-bit game — please specify) and a poster featuring the controversial artwork, as featured in TGM.

Just answer the three questions below, pop your answers on a postcard (along with your name, age, address and computer) to Hewson Competition, TGM, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB. Closing date is July 20, and usual rules apply.

1) **Who played the epony mous character in the film, *Carrie*?**
2) **In what county are Hewson based?**
3) **Who is the author of *Astaroth*, name two other games he has helped pro gram?**



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The Duel is available now on PC, Amiga and Commodore 64 disk and is currently being converted for cassette on Commodore 64, Amstrad and Spectrum formats.

Now Accolade are giving away a Porsche! (Editors and children first!) Hold on, Kean... It's not actually a real Porsche but a 500 Porsche 959 radio controlled 4WD kit (1/12 scale) and it could be yours if you're the winner of this here comp.

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Answers on a postcard or back of a sealed envelope to: **DUEL DRIVING COMP, TGM, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB**. Entries to arrive here by July 20, and, as always, TGM's wonderfully devised competition rules apply.

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• And drive like a maniac with ACCOLADE!



The model car pictured here is an R/C4WD 1/12th scale Porsche 959 by Tamiya Plastic Model Co, Japan. Copyright 1986 Tamiya

Robin Candy's PLAYING TIPS

After last month's console bonanza this month's playing tips returns to its normal format, but Sega and Nintendo owners needn't worry — we've got more console specials planned for future issues, so keep writing in. I'm especially looking for tips on Voyager, Populous, Project Firstart, Lords of the Rising Sun... and anything that's up to date. If you want to win £50 worth of software of your own choice send in those tips!

Zak McKraken

All formats — Part Three

This third instalment sees Zak getting closer to saving the world from the alien mindbenders.

Wait around in the plane for a while. The pilot gives you a parachute. Then wait for a while longer. You're now inside the alien space ship. Make a note of the colours the pilot presses on the wall. You need these later to get off the space ship.

Press the button on the door. An alien now comes and takes you to the king. As soon as you are able to move, give the guitar to the king. The alien then shows you the way out — make sure you don't cross the line on the floor or you'll be transported back home.

Walk back to the king's room, read the Lott-O-Dictor and make a note of the number you see. Walk back to the coloured buttons and press them in the same order as the numbers on the Lott-O-Dictor. Walk to the left of the line on the floor and wait.

You will now be falling very fast, so use the parachute. When you land on the water use the kazoo. A dolphin appears. Use the blue crystal and you can control the dolphin. Now go right, swimming underwater, till you find the largest piece of seaweed covering a lump of fallen stone. Pick up the seaweed and you should find a glowing device. Pick this up and return to the surface. Give the glowing device to Zak. Change back to Zak.

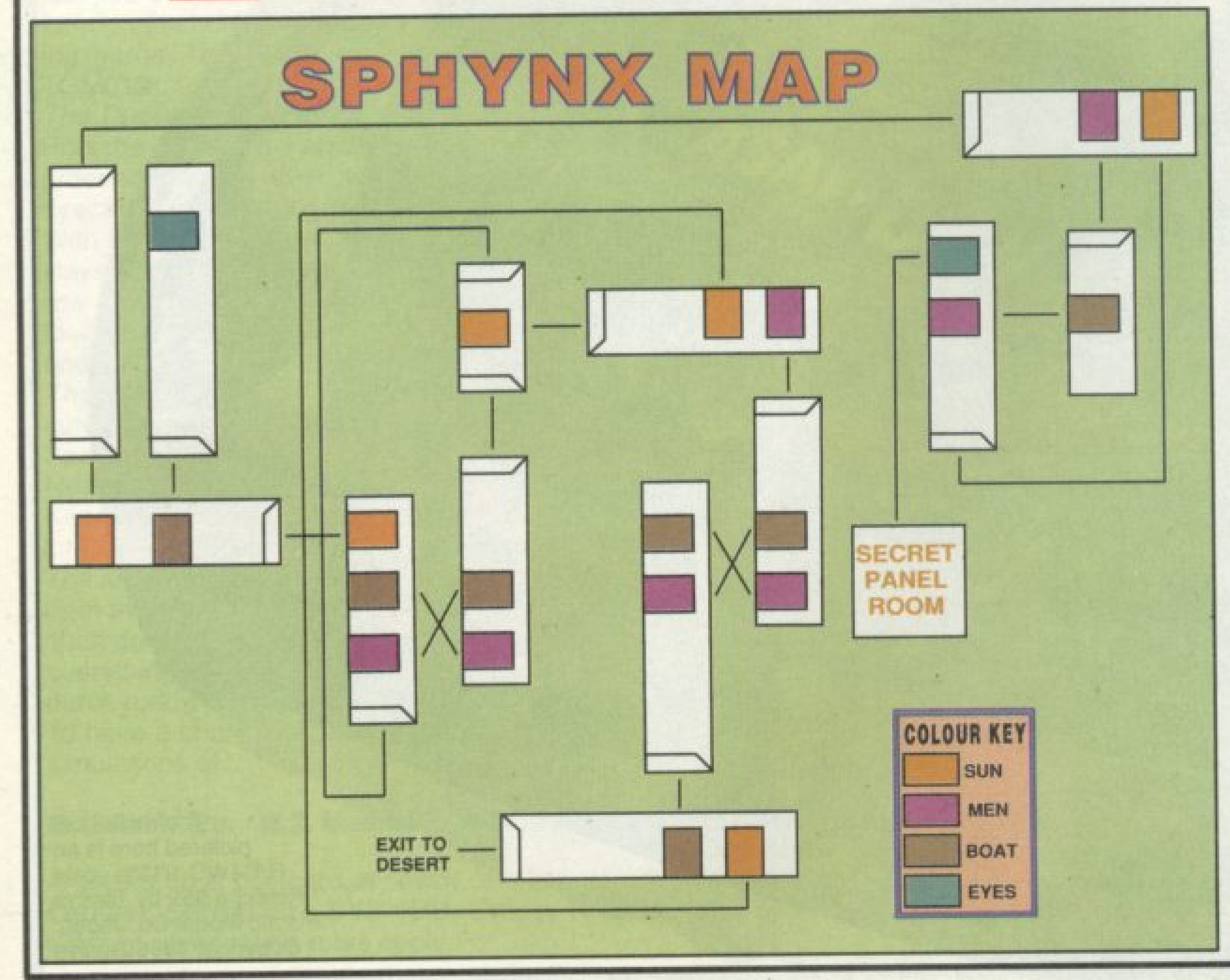
Wait around and an alien takes you away to their secret room. He puts you into their mindbending machine and you lose your mind, but don't worry because it returns okay later. When you're set free you find yourself standing outside the phone company shop. Walk to the left, go up the stairs to your house and then go into your bedroom. Use the monkey wrench on the loose boards. Use the rope on the hole. Now walk to the rope and you find yourself in the alien secret room. Walk left to the cabinet and open it. Inside you will find everything the aliens took off you. Go back up the rope to the bedroom and walk out of the house.

Make your way to Lou's Loan shop. Go inside and buy a lotto ticket and enter the number you wrote down in the alien space ship. Now go back outside and switch to Leslie.

Go to the first large door on the left. Use the ladder on the pedestal and pick up the crystal shear. This opens the large door. Pick up the ladder and go through the large door. Turn on the flashlight. Now use the Mars Face Map and make your way to the generator room. Turn on both the switches until both gauges are at the green level. Now take off your helmet. Using the map, make your way to the map room. Read the strange markings on the wall. Make a note of these and call it diagram 2. Switch back to Zak.

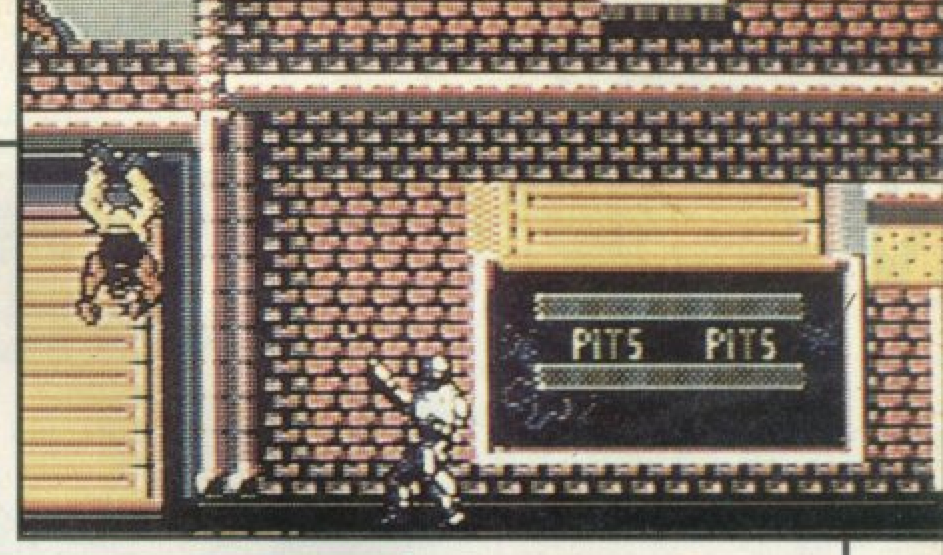
Go into Lou's Loan shop. You should have won the lotto. If it hasn't been drawn yet, wait around outside for a while, then go back into the shop. Keep repeating this till you have won the lotto. Eventually you win £10,000 which you need for spending. Go back outside and go to the bus. Use the kazoo and use the cashcard in the card reader when the bus door opens.

Use the reservations terminal and buy a ticket to Miami. Walk



to the plane. Use the reservations terminal and buy a ticket to Cairo. Walk to the plane. Walk outside and go right till you arrive at the Sphynx. Look at the legs and find the one with the strange markings. Use the yellow crayon on the markings and draw the markings from diagram 2. A secret door opens. Go through this. Using the Sphynx map, make your way to the room with the secret panel. As soon as you get there switch to Annie.

Walk to the airport. Use the reservations terminal and buy a ticket to Cairo. Walk to the plane. Walk outside and right until you find the Sphynx. Go through the secret door. Go to the room with the secret panel. Read the hieroglyphics. Push the buttons on the wall in the order stated by the hieroglyphics. Switch to Zak.



Daley Thompson's Olympic Challenge



(Atari ST)

Daniel Lloyd from Birmingham sent in this cheat.

When the title screen appears type in **'HINGSEN.J'**. The cheat mode is now activated allowing you to select different events using the function keys.

RoboCop

(Commodore 64)

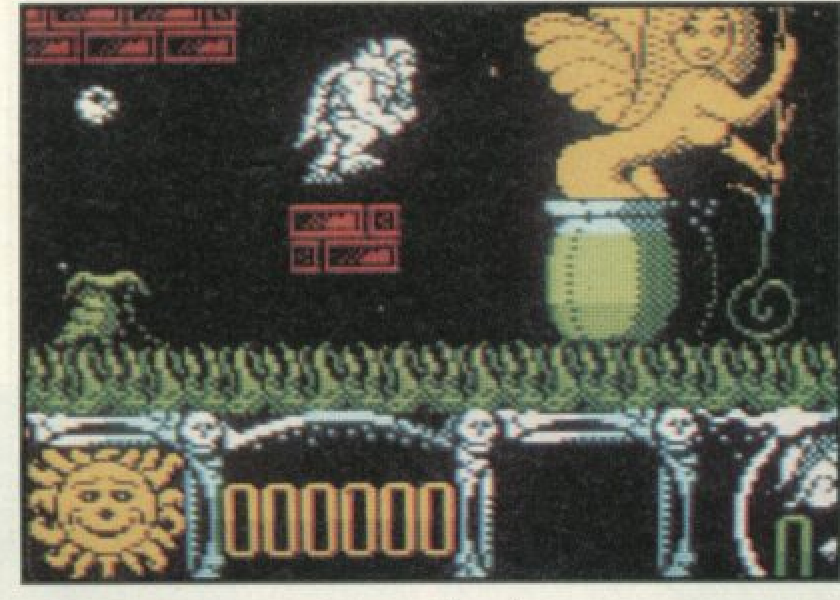
PS Kenney of Leicester gets through the levels a bit quicker like this...

On loading the game make a note of the tape counter numbers as each level loads. On completing the second level you're prompted 'Well done Murphy load in the next level'. Now press fire on the joystick and fast forward the tape to the last level. You can load the last level without completing the drug factory.

Stormlord

(Spectrum)

Hewson have kindly sent in these tips to complete the first three levels of their hit Spectrum game.



Level 1

1) Go left and get the key.
2) Go right past the worms and open the door.
3) Use the first visible spring board.
4) Get fairy and use the spring board.
5) Get umbrella
6) Use the second visible spring board.
7) Go left and get the honey pot.
8) Go right and swap the honey pot for the key.
9) Get fairy from brick chamber.
10) Go right past the eggs and flies and open the chamber door with the key.
11) Get fairy and use the springboard.
12) Go right and get the honey pot.
13) Go left and swap the honey pot for the umbrella.
14) Go right till you're out of range from the bees so that they calm down.
15) Go left and get the key.
16) Go right (ignore the first door) past the worms and open chamber door.
17) Get the final fairy.

Level 2

1) Go left and get the key.
2) Go right past the pawns and open the chamber.
3) Go right past the second batch of pawns and get shoes.
4) Go left and get the fairy, use the springboard.
5) Go left and jump over the high skull wall.
6) Go left through the worms.
7) Swap the shoes for the umbrella.
8) Get the fairy from the rainy chamber.
9) Go right past the dragons and get the key (disintegrate the platform that it's on).
10) Go left past the dragons and open the door, use the springboard.
11) Get fairy
12) Go right and use the springboard.
13) Use the springboard — get by the open door and get the shoes.
14) Go right past the flies and get the honey pot.
15) Drop down and use the springboard.
16) Divert the swarm and get the fairy.
17) Go right and open the chamber door.
18) Get shoes.
19) Get the fairy from the high ledge.
20) Use springboard whilst pressing right (to avoid the fly trap) and get the final fairy.

Level 3

1) Go left past the knights and get the key.
2) Go right past the knights and use the springboard (press right at the same time to avoid the fly trap).
3) Go right and open the door.
4) Get the fairy.
5) Drop down and go right past the knights.
6) Get shoes.
7) Go left past the knights.
8) Go up and use the springboard.
9) Go left and jump over the high wall.
10) Swap shoes for the key in mid air.
11) Open chamber door and get fairy.
12) Use the spring board.
13) Collapse the chamber roof by standing on it.
14) Get the fairy.
15) Go right past the flies and open the chamber door.
16) Get the fairy.
17) Go left and get the shoes.
18) Go right and jump up into the high chamber.
19) Get the fairy
20) Use the springboard.
21) Get the fairy.
22) Use the spring board.
23) Get the honey pot.
24) Go right past the dragons.
25) Divert the swarm and get the final fairy.

The Real Ghostbusters

(Amiga)

Matthew and Peter Warner from Basildon win this month's Star Tips award for their infinite lives POKEs. Type in the following listing then SAVE it to disk for future use. Now RUN the program and insert your Real Ghostbusters game disk. I'm particularly keen for POKEs on 16-bit games, so keep sending them in.

```
10 DIM CODE%(255)
20 FOR N = 0 TO 95
30 READ A$: A=VAL("&H"+A$)
40 CODE%(N)=A
50 NEXT N
60 CHEAT=VARPTR(CODE%(0))
70 CALL CHEAT
80 REM TYPE IN THIS LISTING AND SAVE FOR FUTURE USE
90 REM INSERT GHISTBUSTERS DISK AND RUN THIS PROGRAM
100 REM GAME SHOULD LOAD AS USUAL WITH INFINITE LIVES
110 DATA 70FF, 2C78, 0004, 4EAE, FEB6, 2200, 5280, 6772
120 DATA 4BFA, 00EE, 3AFC, 0400, 429D, 3AC1, 93C9, 4EAE
130 DATA FEDA, 2AC0, 2A8D, 2B4D, 0008, 589D, 4295, 4BFA
140 DATA 0090, 1ABC, 0005, 3B7C, 0030, 000A, 41ED, 0038
150 DATA 2B48, 0006, 41FA, 0060, 7000, 7200, 43FA, 006A
160 DATA 4EAE, FE44, 4A80, 6600, 002A, 700C, 99CC, 6100
170 DATA 0024, 7002, 49F9, 0007, 0000, 6100, 0018, 297C
180 DATA 31FC, 4A54, 00AE, 297C, 57E0, 6004, 00B2, 4EEC
190 DATA 000C, 4E75, 43FA, 0032, 3340, 001C, 234C, 0028
200 DATA 42A9, 002C, 237C, 0000, 0400, 0024, 337C, 0030
210 DATA 0012, 4EEE, FE38, 7472, 6163, 6B64, 6973, 6B2E
220 DATA 6465, 7669, 6365, 0000, 0000, 0000, 0000, 0000
```

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Yes, it's your hints, tips, POKEs and — especially — maps we want. And there's £50 worth of software (your choice) for the star tipster each month. Send them to: Robin Candy's Playing Tips, TGM, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.

Gradius

(Nintendo)

This excellent game has attracted the following tips from Mark Longman of Chingford.

Level 1
At the end of this level you come face to face with erupting volcanoes. To avoid being destroyed by deadly lava go to the very top left-hand corner of the screen and keep blasting.

Level 2
Near the end of this level there's a wall which you have to blast your way through. When you have passed through the wall you see a little cubby-hole in the white rocks. Pull your ship into the hole — but do it carefully otherwise you will crash — and you gain an extra life.

Level 3
When you start this level make sure you have a missile powered up. Try to stay at the top of the screen — it makes life much easier. Whén the heads appear go to the top left-hand corner of the screen and use your missiles and lasers.

Level 4
This is the same as level 1 but upside down. When the volcanoes appear go directly below the volcano on the left to avoid the lava.

Level 5
When the brains with arms appear don't shoot at the brain itself but aim for the arms to disable the laser guns.

Level 6
This level is very tricky, so try to obtain the laser power up as soon as possible. Otherwise you find it very difficult to progress through the aliens. At the end of the level there's a volcano. Before it starts to erupt you see two gaps between two arms. Zoom into one of these gaps and you are safe from the erupting lava. When the volcano has finished erupting it blows up. Now fly out of the opening and finish the level.

Carrier Command

(Amiga)

Another quick hint from Tom Davies.

Start the action game and pause. Type in **'THE BEST IS YET TO BE'**. This should activate the cheat mode. During the game press + on the keypad to protect Mantas and AAVs from enemy missiles.

Chan and Chan

(PC Engine)

The PC Engine hasn't been available for long in the UK, but it's already attracting tips. Try this cheat from Brian Dick of Wareham to skip to the higher levels.

Halfway through the last level of world 1 (when the birds are flying overhead) there's a little bridge made of kickable bricks. Walk over it then turn and kick as many bricks as you can. Drop down the hole that you've made and you bounce back up and off the top of the screen. You are now in a secret warp zone which allows you to warp to worlds 2, 3 or 4.

Barbarian

(Amiga)

Tom Davies from Barrow on Trent sent in this handy pointer for the popular slash-'em-up game.

Type in **04 08 59** on the start up screen to enter the cheat mode.



Leisure Suit Larry 2

(All Formats)

Seirra On Line games seem to be attracting a lot of attention from tipsters. Andrew Ellis and Andrew Harris from Evesham have sent in these tips to help Larry on his quest for love.

First guide Larry to the garage, go inside and collect the dollar bill. Now leave the garage and go up, up, up, right, right, right and enter the store. Go to the counter and get the ticket.

When you're asked to type in your lucky numbers type in anything you want. Leave the store and go left three times and enter the TV studio. Go to the girl and give her the ticket. She then gives you six numbers and when she asks what numbers you've got, type in the six numbers. You are automatically sent to the green room. Sit down on the bench and wait. After about 30 seconds a man comes into the room and asks you to follow him. Stand up and follow him.

It doesn't really matter how you answer Barbie's questions as you always win. When the man leaves the room sit down and wait for the girl to leave the room. Follow her. After winning your $1 million note leave the studio.

Find the blue building which sells clothes. Go inside and look closely at the screen. You notice a sign at the back of the shop. Go to the rack of shorts beneath the sign and type 'get swimsuit'. Take the swimsuit to the front of the counter and buy the swimsuit. Leave the building and go to liquor store. Go to the soda dispenser and type 'get grotesque gulp' then go to the counter and buy it. Leave the store and go to the chemist.

Walk to the red rack and get the sunscreen. Then go to the counter and buy it. Now go to the barbers shop. Go in and have your hair cut. Leave the store and carry on left till find the screen on which you originally started. You notice two bins outside your house. Search these for your passport. Now go to the music store and talk to the girl. After a while a small automatic sequence begins. When this has ended you see Larry next to a bar.

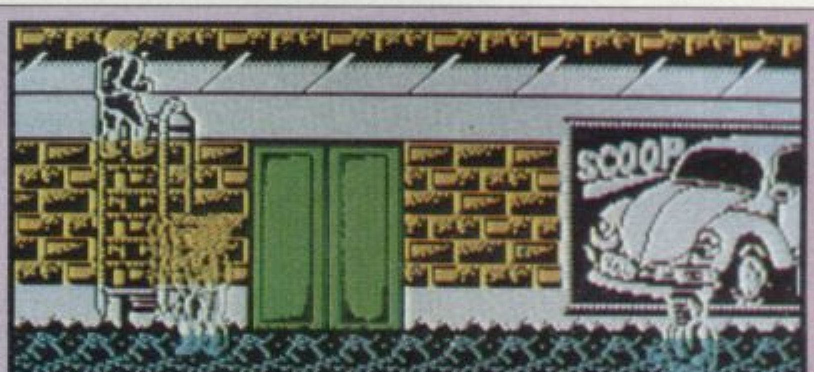
Go left but do not talk to the drunk as he is a KGB agent. Go to the barbers then right ti;l you reach a ship. Give the sailor your passport and ticket and walk up the gangplank. You're now ready to go cruising.

Dragon Ninja

(Commodore 64)

Type in the following listing from TAW of Surrey and RUN it. Start the Dragon Ninja tape. When it loads you will have infinite lives and time.

```
1 FOR X = 400 TO 437: READ
  Y: C = C+Y: POKE X, Y: NEXT
2 IF C = 4015 THEN POKE 157,
  128: SYS 400
3 PRINT "THAT IS WRONG"
4 DATA 32, 86, 245, 169, 32,
  141, 84, 3, 169, 166, 141, 85,
  3
5 DATA 169, 1, 141, 86, 3, 96,
  72, 77, 80, 72, 169, 173, 141
6 DATA 122, 128, 169, 0, 141,
  76, 130, 194, 173, 32, 208, 96
```

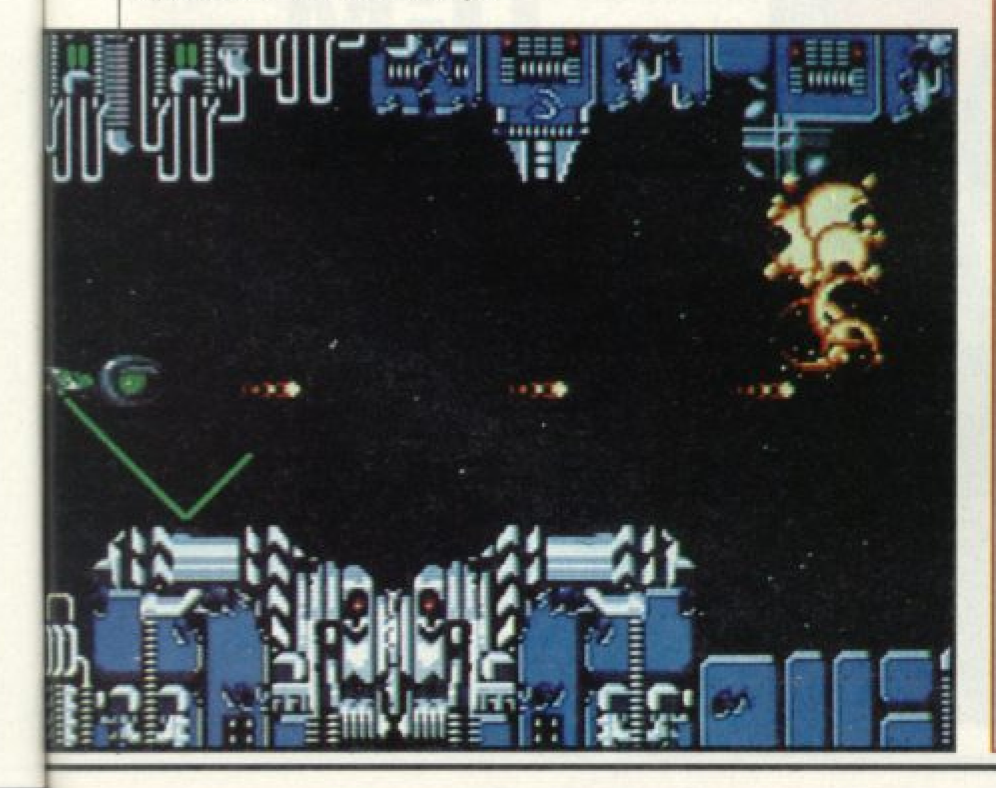


Denaris

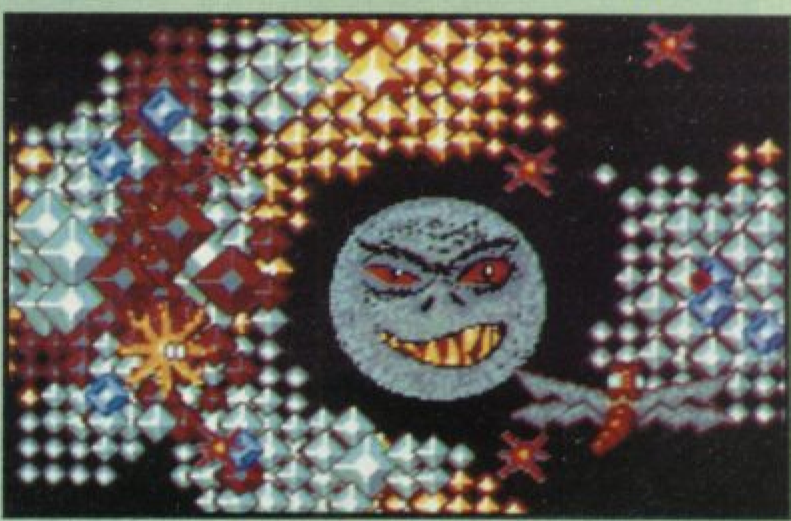
(Commodore 64)

Martin Howes from Newbury supplied these tips on how to defeat the end-of-level demons, but he's not telling where on the last demon is its weak spot — that's one you'll have to work out for yourselves.

1. Molusc — shoot in the forehead.
2. Molusc — shoot in the eye
3. Fish — shoot in the mouth
4. Robot — shoot the ball in the centre of the robot.
5. Robot (on tracks) — shoot in the face.
6. Spider — shoot in the mouth.
7. Brain — shoot the centre.
8. Fish — shoot the centres of both parts.
9. Shrimp — shoot the centre. To kill the end-of-level demons from level four onwards you need the satel lite attached to the mother ship.



Wicked Tips



(Amiga and Atari ST)

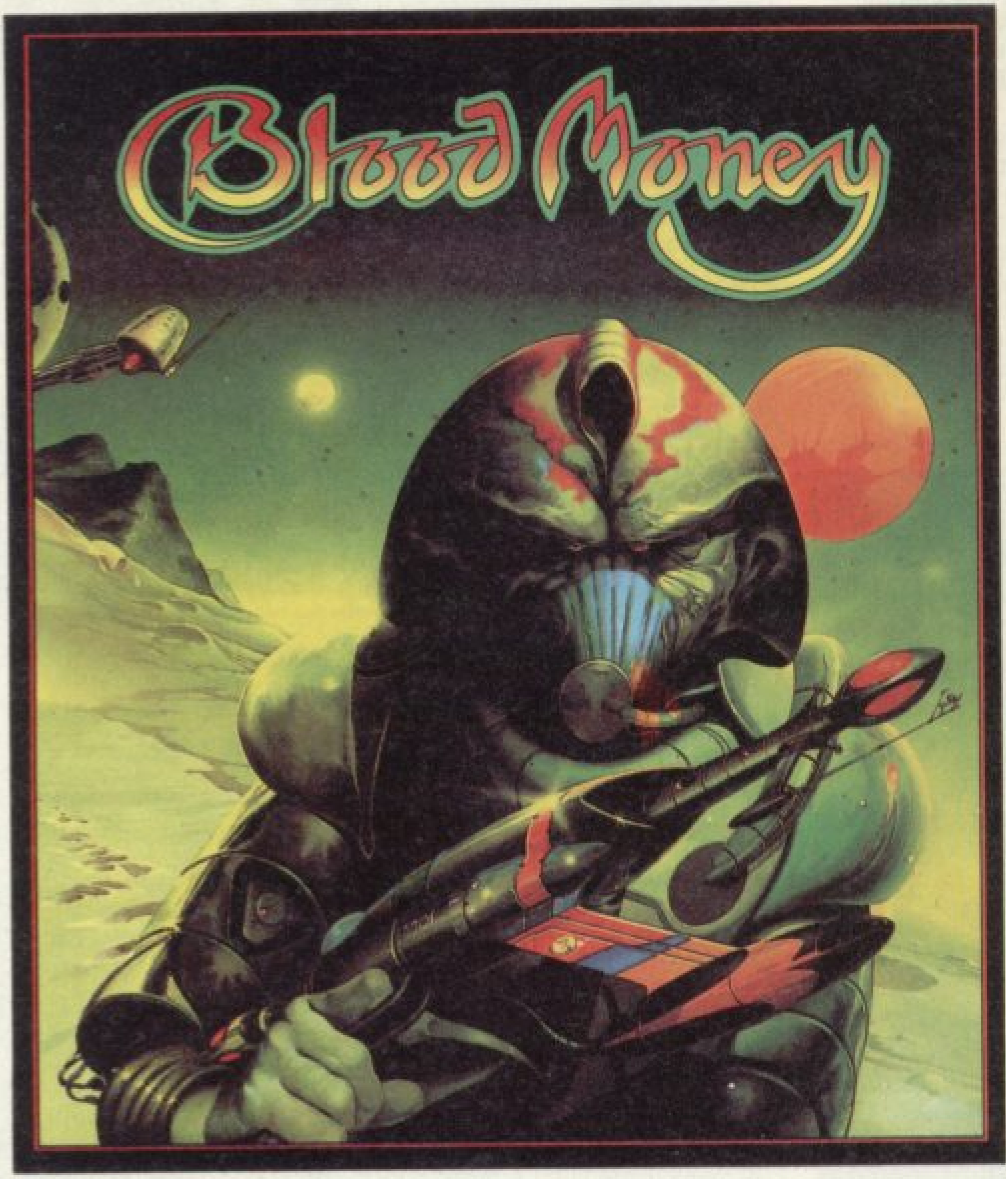
Robin Hogg set to work on Electric Dreams's latest blockbuster. Here are a few of his findings.

Your first objective is to get rid of all of darkness's spores, everything else takes second place. Keep your growths spreading by planting new spores on the edges of your territory, or in large groups for safety.

Get rid of any enemy spores which find their way deep into your territory immediately — they have a nasty habit of spreading fast. In the day phase pick up the sun icon and attach it to the guardian. Five seconds later he's gone. It's best to collect the two mini-sun multiples rather than anything else, as they triple your firepower. Use the mini-sun wherever possible and get those red spores before they fly off to spawn.

If things are looking bleak, keep calm and try to maintain a spore stronghold in at least one part of the playing area; it's no good having small bunches of spores dotted around as they are easy prey for enemy spores.

OKAY SO WHERE IS THE MONEY?



Right here in TGM

We are looking for the best Amiga and Atari ST computer artists, the sort of person who can design screens like the one at the start of the Psygnosis game Blood Money based on the packaging art (left) by Roger Dean



Announcing a major 16-bit Computer Art Competition

The Games machine

As anyone who has played the brilliant ***Blood Money*** from 16-bit supremos, **Psygnosis**, will know, the unanswered question is: 'Where *is* the money?' Well the truth is, right here in TGM!

The value of the prizes in this one-off TGM/Psygnosis competition is virtually £2,000 — and the priceless possibility of Fame And Glory! If you happen to own an Amiga or Atari ST, then all this could be yours.

Ever fancied yourself as a bit of an artist? Think you can match the terrific artwork that we've seen recently on the likes of ***Ballistix*** and ***Blood Money***? Well, **Psygnosis** have laid down the gauntlet. The challenge is on to find the best computer artist on the 16-bits.

Each format will be judged separately, with one winner in each format category.

The winner with the best piece of artwork designed on the Amiga will receive an extremely expensive bit of software called ***Sculpt 4D*** (and any hardware upgrades you may need to run it).

The first-prize winner on the Atari ST will receive a **Cherry Graphics Tablet** (worth over £600!).

Five runners-up will each receive the complete range of **Psygnosis** software currently available for their computer.

And that's not all. Each of the winners' screens will, if suitable, be used on the frontend of a future **Psygnosis** release. In fact you may even be commissioned to do future work for the Liverpool-based software producers — although we're not guaranteeing anything.

Each of the winners will also be invited to this year's PC Show, to be held in London, where they will be presented with their prizes.

So get out those graphics packages and start designing your masterpiece. Here's a hint — the staggeringly exciting loading screens on ***Blood Money*** used hardly any of the tools in *DeLuxe Paint III*, but as with many pictures were created by switching pixels. You aren't restricted like this in the competition however, but we are looking for very realistic graphics. **There is no restriction on the number of individual graphics you send in.** The closing date is August 10, and all the normal competition rules apply.

Send your entries on 3.5-inch disk to **PSYGNOSIS ART COMPETITION, TGM, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB**, and make sure you have filled out the entry form below.

Name ....
Address ....
....
....Postcode ....
Machine ....
Telephone Number ....
Folder/Filename on disk 1 ....
2 ....
3 ....
Others ....
....
....
....

HOW WRONG I WAS

In conclusion...

In the final instalment of Argonaut's diary of F-117A Aggressor, Hawk or whatever they're calling it this month, maths 'n' menus man Paul Reid puts pen to paper and reveals the nightmare of calculations...



As I walked into the office, it seemed a clipper was the order of the day — this clips two-dimensional polygons to rectangles. So, being pretty much au fait with the world of clipping, I grabbed a wad of paper and started drawing some really nasty polygons and working some preliminary sums. These done, work started on the actual coding of the clipper. I got a full set of polygon routines written and slapped in my clipper code.

It seemed to work perfectly — it was difficult to spot, but eventually we realised that there were a few cases where the clipping failed; points were given to wrong coordinates and some lines were missing. We slowly tracked down the faults and realised that it only happened with points on the border. So Ian Crowther (last month's TGM diarist) and I took a couple of days to create some special cases in which the failure happened. As with most major problems, once the trouble was found it was relatively simple to correct and the clipper performed to expectations. All polygons we threw at it, it threw back with a snarl and asked for more...

So there am I, practising being chuffed at getting the clipper to clip at a thoroughly acceptable speed (even Pete 'Speed Merchant' Warnes was satisfied!), when it seemed I was number one man to do the polygon priority routines — roughly, working out which shape covers which. The simplest way to do this is to look at the Z coordinates of each point, average those and sort them into order. Mostly, this works quite well but when polygons start getting long and thin problems arise as the average Z coordinate of the polygon is in the middle of it, the ends might be quite a distance apart. Which means if you have a long polygon next to a small one they can get drawn in the wrong order.

We could colour both faces the same — that way you wouldn't notice — but we might lose any detail the shapes have. As all our shapes are really complex, we didn't want to spoil all Danny's great work. So we worked it out — and it's a secret!

They said do the maps next. Simple, I thought — HOW WRONG I WAS! The final map editor needed a little over 600K to run, and gave yours truly an exponential number of brainaches. The problem was getting a large map containing lots of detail.

Eventually, it was decided that the map should be 4096 kilometers square. So doing our little sums we worked out that 409,600,000 centimetres was a very annoying number, not being even close to the powers of two that we in the trade love so well. The closest one we could come up with was 536,870,912 centimetres (2e29), which fortunately fits into a longword, thus making the maths at least possible...

Of course the map was now not an exact number of kilometers across, and thinking in terms of numbers such as 5,367 is not at all good for the head... so we cheated. A kilometre is now 1024 metres long and a metre is 128 centimeters. Thus the 'EEC kilometre' was born and we could think in powers of two again (bliss)...

We divided the map into a 16x16 matrix and gave each square either land, sea or coastline and a political status (friend, foe or neutral).

We thought of doing fractal coastlines. However, this gave Pete Warnes multiple heart attacks when he counted the large number of polygons, so that idea was scrapped fairly swiftly. But someone still might think the area was a bit blocky, so something had to be done. A compromise was reached with the current coastline routine, this further divides each coastal square into small triangles and makes them into either beach or sea according to the shape of the surrounding land. It isn't as pretty as the fractal routine, but it looked acceptable and didn't add too many polygons to the list...

I realised that, while working on placing different objects on the map, further zooming in was needed to put the objects in precisely the required positions. Each object needed to be positioned accurately and given an orientation relative to map north. Easy. Soon I was putting bridges and chinese takeaways all over the place. This was very impressive (for a few minutes) then people started to demand other things like roads and buildings.

This provided more brainache as a lot of the objects (like roads and rivers) require special treatment to cope with the lorries and barges which would be used to transport supplies from towns and factories to airbases and military installations. For example, if you wished to place a road on the map it had to have information as to which other roads it was linked to, where it was going, how wide it was and in what state of repair. Rivers were slightly less complex, but the possibility of having river transport in the game meant that most of the information required for a road was necessary for a river too.

Having fixed length roads made life considerably easier and after thinking for a while, fixed angles seemed the only way of making a workable road system — roads were now only at 45-degree angles. Roads and rivers joining isolated objects would look a little bit daft, so it was decided to put actual cities on the map as well. And since I prefer eating a chinese to working, an automatic city generator seemed in order.

Now we had to decide what was in the cities. They had to look sensible, so after some hard thinking Danny and I worked out a method that would produce vaguely normal-looking cities, with skyscrapers and offices in the middle, graduating to parks, houses (and chinese takeaways) towards the edges. Each object having a probability map to work to, showing how likely it was for it to appear at set distances from the centre of the city — not easy.

Then the inevitable happened: I had a wonderful map editor and they go and change the size of the accursed map!!! There were genuine reasons, which had to do with the maximum flight range and top speed of the aircraft we were using — 4096 Kilometres was perhaps a little on the big side, taking a little over four hours of game time and about 5 refuelling stops to fly from one side to the other — so my map was divided by four (not a nice thing for my calculations, but I did it — so there!).

That was it, the most astounding map editor this side of Jupiter, bells, whistles and even the odd steam organ to keep people happy and to top all things, it even works...!

F-117A Aggressor is finished — well almost. All that now remains is to finish off the finicky bits of tidying up, get the packaging organised, sort out the distributors, think up some artwork — all those unimportant details which make all the difference to getting into the shops and not!

And, of course, there are the magazines to visit to get the vital reviews. TGM will bring you the review first as soon as we have the finished game — so stay tuned for what will be really the final chapter of the Argonaut Diary...

The realms of fantasy

SKYREALMS OF JORUNE

Information from SkyRealms Publishing, PO Box 5543, Berkeley CA 94705. USA.

To the human explorers of the 22nd century, Jorune was a bizarre but promising world. Earth-like enough to comfortably support human life, it also housed several intelligent native lifeforms, including the enigmatic Shanthas — semi-humanoid creatures with an incredibly complex language but apparently primitive technology. The planet itself was a further puzzle, showing signs of a peculiar and powerful energy field that permeated everywhere and was unlike any effect previously observed. In spite of these mysteries, the survey teams gave the go-ahead for the establishment of permanent colonies. The native Shanthas grudgingly allowed the human settlers to set up their colonies, but would only permit them to occupy certain restricted areas of land.

Then came disaster...

No sooner was the last colony ship safely down when news came of a global war back on Earth — and all communication lost. Denied the urgently-needed supply ships, the colonists took desperate steps. Violating the agreed territorial limits, they began mining and farming operations on a large scale. Only then did mankind first see the true power of the natives. Using their ability to shape and warp the mysterious Jorune energy field the Shanthas destroyed every human spaceship and devastated the colonies in a matter of hours. In retaliation the colonists unleashed biological warfare agents that virtually wiped out the Shantha race. Much of their technology destroyed, the remaining humans abandoned their shattered colonies and 'went native'. In a few generations their descendants had all but forgotten their origins. It would be over three millenia before any traces of the former glory of Earth and its technology were found again on Jorune...

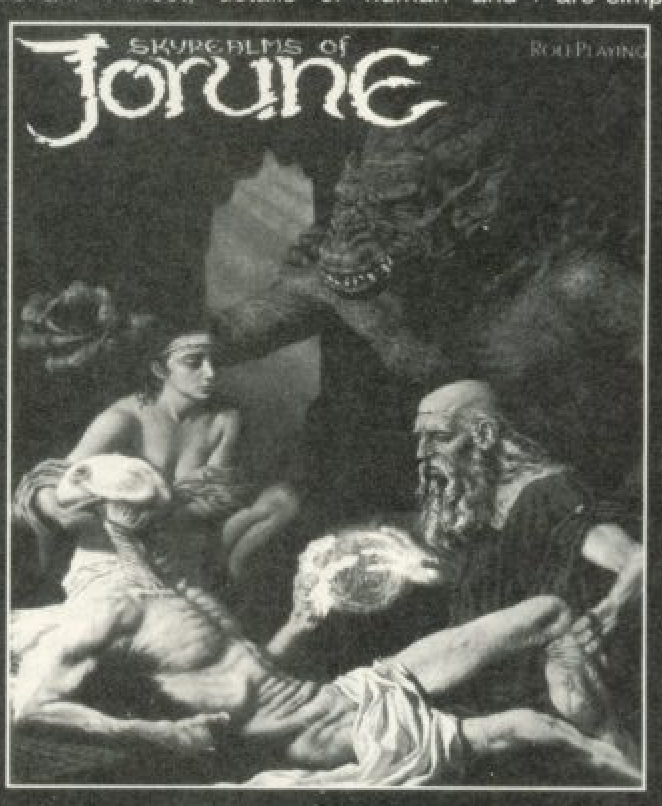
This is the unusual and fascinating setting for SkyRealms Of Jorune. Players take the roles of humans or one of the two human sub-species (muadra and boccords) in the world of Jorune some 3,500 years after the disastrous human/Shantha war. Human society is at a medieval level, but some caches of functional ancient Earth Tech artefacts — both weapons and more peaceful devices — have recently been found, and scholars are gradually beginning to gain understanding of them. Humanity is taking the first tentative steps out of the Dark Ages once more.

Many other varied races exist on Jorune, both original natives and species derived from human stock by deliberate genetic manipulation. In the former category come the Thriddle — bizarre-looking, peaceful and highly intelligent, with a constant thirst for knowledge — and the Cleash, haunting the remoter regions. In the latter group are the bear-like Bronth and wolf-like Woffen. And there are the Shanthas, their ways as enigmatic as ever as they slowly rebuild their shattered population, coming only rarely into contact with humans. Along with these and many other intelligent species, the adventurer on Jorune also has a myriad of animal life to contend with, from the harmless Pibber (often kept as pets) to the awesome, dinosaur-like Dhar Corondon. The Jorune setting may have similarities to to other FRPG's but there are no elves, dwarves or trolls here. Instead, the game provides a dazzling array of creatures of convincing alien origins.

In the same way, Jorune has no 'magic' in the usual sense. Instead there is the all-pervading energy field, known as isho. This substance is intrinsic to the planet, and ebbs and flows in a way similar to terrestrial weather patterns, influencing everything though which it passes. Natural manifestations of this field include the amazing SkyRealms: huge floating islands of rock, sometimes a mile or more across, that hang suspended in the air by the force of opposing isho currents. All Jorune inhabitants, including humans, are affected by the isho to some degree. Some can actively manipulate the power of the isho to achieve almost magical effects — Muadra, in particular, are able to form orbs of isho energy that can be used to heal wounds, injure enemies or enhance the senses. The Shanthas are the true masters of isho manipulation, and can harness awesome powers such as the destructive energies that destroyed the original Earth colonies.

Jorune is a wonderfully complex world where the fantastic, the futuristic and the simply bizarre mingle to create a richness of opportunities for adventure.

The boxed set includes five booklets (nearly 200 pages in all plus reference charts and character record sheets. You'll need your own dice, but everything else required for adventuring on Jorune is here! The Player Manual provides some background and gives the details of the rules system. The Sholari Guide is the referee's book — a Sholari is a Shanthic priest, probably the most powerful single being on Jorune. This gives full descriptions and game statistics for the many intelligent and non-intelligent creatures that adventuring players will meet, details of human and alien technology, and further background that the referee will need.

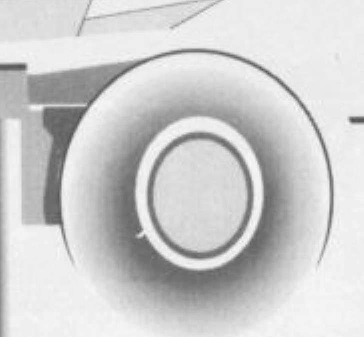


The Tauther Guide is designed for the players more than the referee. This gives information about the inhabitants, geography and culture of Jorune at the level of detail that starting characters would be likely to know, without going into the greater depth of the Sholari Guide. This is a very clever touch, providing players with a wide range of background material without revealing secrets that should only be known to the referee, and thus giving players chance to learn by exploration. The final two booklets are an introductory adventure set on a SkyRealm and a 20-page rules supplement, giving a number of recent improvements made to the system since the original printing. This is a little inconvenient — the new rules are certainly better, but you need to be very familiar with the contents of the supplement as well as the original rulebooks to use them smoothly.

The rules system itself is pretty straightforward, though rather different from most systems. The combat rules are rather elegant. Players first make an advantage dice roll to determine whether they have a chance to hit their opponent. A second roll based on the character's skill level with his or her weapon is then made to determine if the opportunity was converted into a hit. No hit points are used; instead, a successful blow has a range of possible effects from a superficial wound to instant death. The rules for the use of non-combat skills are perhaps not so neat, but they are simple to use and perfectly adequate. Characters will gradually improve their skills with time, depending on their ability to learn and the difficulty of the particular skill.

The most striking feature of the *Jorune* package is the wealth of amazing illustrations scattered throughout. These are mostly drawings of the huge variety of Jorune lifeforms, and serve to instantly bring them to life. I've seldom seen a roleplaying game use illustrations to such atmospheric effect, and they add to a high overall standard of presentation which is let down only by my usual bugbear (all together now) — the absence of an index. The organisation of the rules is sufficiently good that this seldom presents much problem, though.

SkyRealms Of Jorune offers a wealth of material for your money, and presents a setting which is both unusual and convincing in its imaginative richness. A really striking game that every roleplayer should try.



Adventure supremo, role-playing master and strategy general, Paul Rigby, takes a staff in one hand and a bag of magic in the other, and prepares to do battle with a veritable gathering of foreigners

I can't think of a better way to begin a new column than to be awash with Infocoms. Speaking of which, I intend to introduce several new features over the coming months: regular news, rumours and gossip columns covering items from home and abroad.

I'll also be taking a regular look at home-produced software, and featuring the best. So send them along to the usual address (any format). I've been playing home-produced adventures for years and had loads of fun with them.

write to me, Paul Rigby, at The Games Machine, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB and see your scrawl in print. Till next month, brave adventurers...

Amiga (also on PC)

SHOGUN Infocom

Adapted by Dave Lebling from the novel by James Clavell, *Shogun* heralds the introduction of graphics in an Infocom adventure. Infocom have said that the introduction of graphics complies with the enhanced graphic abilities of 16-bit machines. However, it is strange that Infocom have waited until Magnetic Scrolls and Level 9 produced several high-quality and best-selling graphic adventures before they finally made their move.

Shogun comes complete with a manual, a map of the known world in 1600 and well-produced fold-out leaflet telling the legend of the Samurai sword on one side with a detailed, annotated picture of it overleaf. You play John Blackthorne, pilot of a merchant ship cast ashore during a raging storm onto Japanese soil. The story tells of Blackthorne's struggle to integrate into a culture totally foreign to his normal beliefs, and of his desire to become a shogun — the real rulers of Japan from 1192 to 1867. However, Blackthorne's biggest struggle is survival.

Along with the introduction of graphics, Infocom have added a variety of new commands such as Colour, to alter the onscreen colours. Onscreen hints are also included. This feature has been criticised in the past, but I'd rather rather use Infocom's hints (which are multi-tiered to prevent you accidently seeing answers to other problems) than see the whole plot while scanning a complete solution in a computer magazine, or pay a fortune in telephone bills and postage searching for a clue.

The story, it has to be said, is a cracking good one — a warning regarding the adult

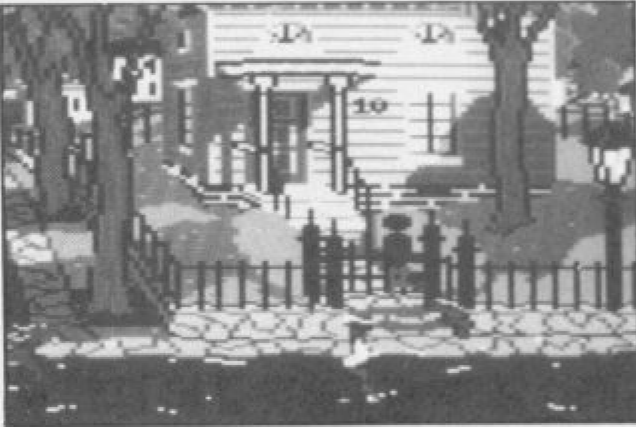
Amiga (also on PC and ST)

GOLD RUSH Sierra

Sierra's latest in a long line of animated adventures focuses on the California Gold Rush of 1848. You play Jerrod Wilson, an East Coast city slicker who decides to follow the tide to Gold Country. Jerrod will experience many adventures and a snippet of each is shown in a humorous introductory sequence via a four-way split screen. Initially, you will prepare for your passage to California but before you leave you'll have to decide which route to take. Choosing either the Panama Trek, Overland Trek or the Cape Horn Trek means that Gold Rush becomes three games in one as each Trek will result in a totally different story.

Sierra have included in excess of 160 scenes within the game which takes it into the league of *Kings Quest IV* for sheer size. Although rather simple, the adventure includes many intriguing puzzles and some excellent animation. Sierra's parser has been improved over their older releases, which is a blessing but there is still plenty of room for improvement. Even so, you will find *Gold Rush* very entertaining with impressive animation — which you cannot help but admire — even if it does lack a little finesse.

ADVENTURE
Presentation 90%
Interaction 80%
Atmosphere 88%
System 83%
Overall 88%



A peaceful scene amid the chaos of gold digging

The ADVENTURE STRATEGY ROLEPLAY Column

nature of the story appears on the rear of the box. Lebling has successfully integrated the storyline into the adventure and captures the atmosphere whole. The graphics? Well, they are well drawn and tasteful; appearing besides the text (a style I prefer to Scrolls' pull-down system). In fact, the graphics complement the text so well, you'd think Infocom had been doing graphic adventures for years. The parser — not totally perfect — is strong enough to do just about anything and there was nothing obviously deficient. The numerous puzzles are a real challenge, but still, thankfully, logical.

I hope *Shogun* is the first of a series of new graphic adventures and not the end of the pure Infocom adventure as is rumoured. *Shogun* is destined to become another Infocom classic. Watch out Magnetic Scrolls and Level 9 — Infocom are back!

ADVENTURE
Presentation 96%
Interaction 90%
Atmosphere 97%
System 94%
Overall 95%

Amiga (also on PC)
JOURNEY Infocom

Marc Blank, co-author of the *Zork* and *Enchanter* series, has surprised us all with this one. *Journey* is an adventure game with roleplaying overtones — in an interactive sort of way. A game with mountains of wonderfully atmospheric text and beautiful pictures, Journey takes the heart out of the adventure game and replants it into a vacuum shell where players cannot get at it, as all commands are selected via menus and the mouse.

Journey is the first installment in the Golden Age Trilogy (oh, no! not another one...). Disease, famine, droughts and general misery has taken a hold on the land. The only hope is to send a party to seek out the old wizard, Astrix. You control a party of four who set upon a mission to relieve their land of the evil that has befallen it.

The screen is divided into a large text window, a smaller graphic window and a set of menu commands below both. Available commands appear and disappear according to the situation but your party are permanently shown. The menu is divided up into party commands, a list of your party and commands which appear next to a character indicating what that particular character can do. Additional features include onscreen hints.

Infocom say that it is impossible to reach a dead end in *Journey*, the story will just keep advancing. A wrong decision will, instead, lead to an unfavourable result. So next time you would try a different course of actions to, hopefully, take you down a different 'branch' of the program. Saving your position is, understandably, very important as you are not aware that you have made a wrong decision until later in the game. The menu system does lead to a feeling of having less freedom but then how much freedom do you really have in a standard adventure game anyway?

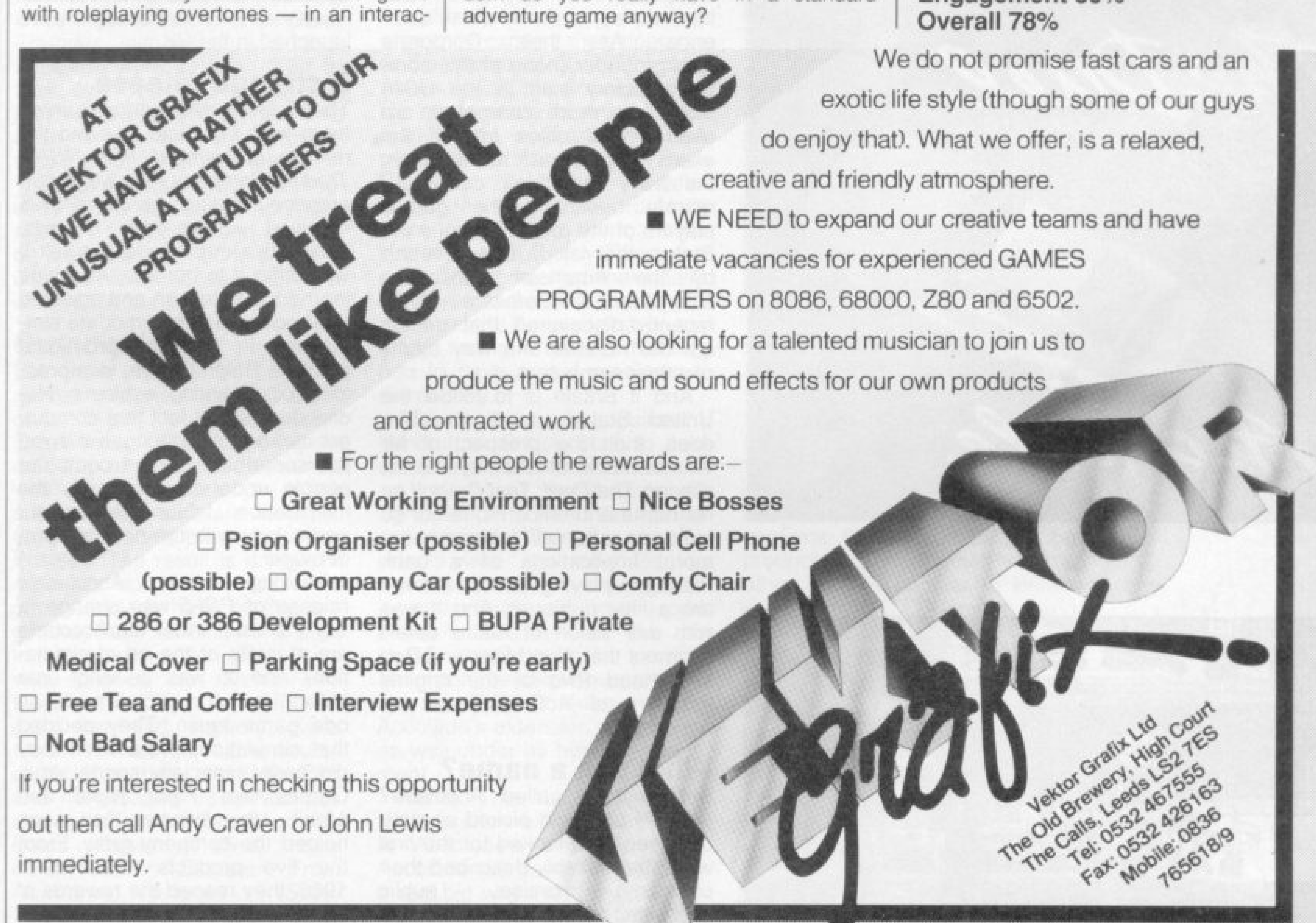
Journey is an interesting development. Infocom are probably one of the few companies who have the ability to tackle menus within an interactive adventure, and the roleplaying aspects are not overbearing either. Recommended.

ADVENTURE
Presentation 95%
Interaction 81%
Atmosphere 89%
System 81%
Overall 87%

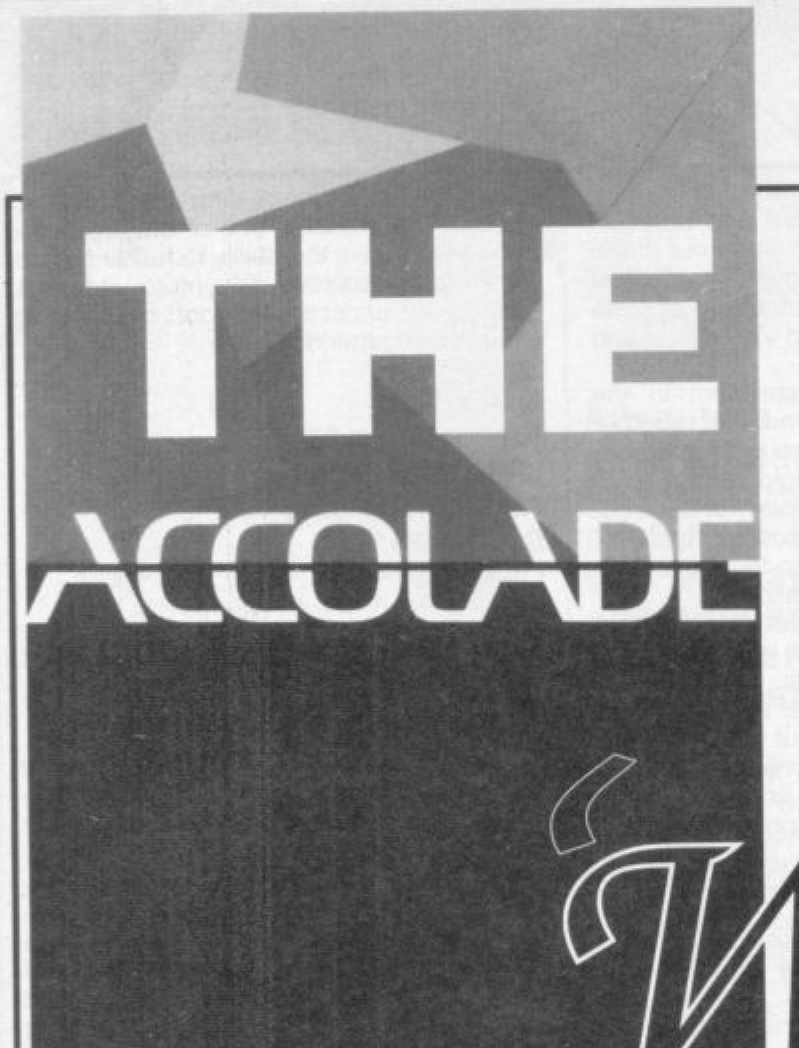
C64 (also on Amiga and PC)
BATTLETECH Infocom

Battletech was reviewed last issue, so I'll contain myself to some comments. The storyline is rather linear but the combat system is competent, with a variety of tactics. Sound is good and graphics are excellent. Nice touches include the small close-up cameo pictures and the damage screens. Infocom have aimed the game at beginners, which is fair enough. However, I hope they develop the system, improving the storyline and the depth of play because there is a great deal of potential here.

RPG
Attributes 81%%
Presentation 85%
Interaction 40%
Atmosphere 72%
Engagement 80%
Overall 78%



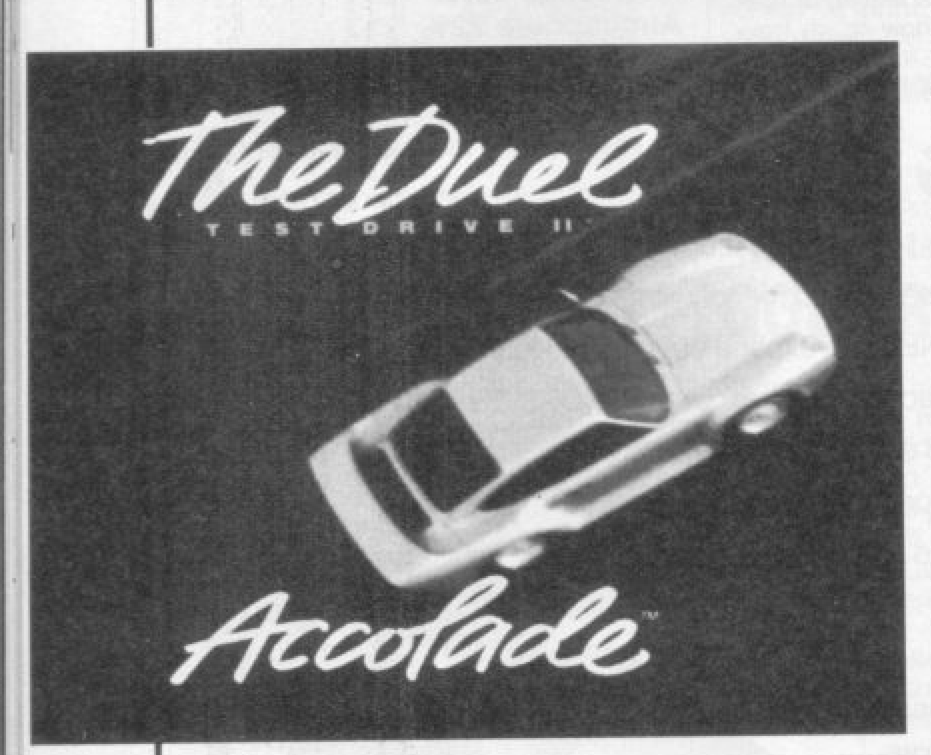
THE REAL ACCOLADE



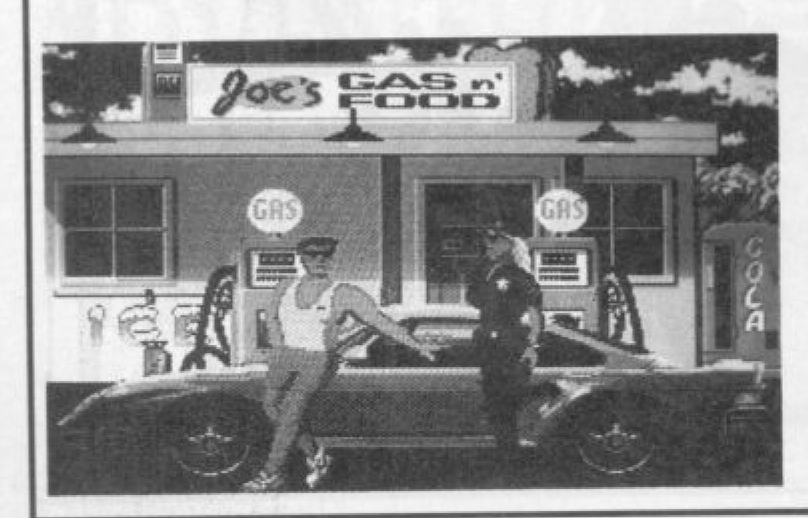
The Yanks are coming! Joining the ranks of Electronic Arts and Epyx, 16-bit simulation experts Accolade are moving into Britain. Dominic Handy talked to the men behind The Duel, Jack Nicklaus and Steel Thunder

'With today's computer games you can sit in the pilot's seat, make the decisions and experience the results of those decisions. No other medium can get you as close to the real thing.' So says Peter Doctorow, vice-president of product development at Accolade's 12,000-square foot San Jose headquarters in California, USA.

Accolade's quest for 'the real thing' began a few years after Coca-Cola's similar quest, and tried to tap a much older audience. As their Corporate Backgrounder (none of this company history stuff in the USA) states: as more computers are used in the office and in the execs' studies back at the ranch, the 'thirty something' crowd are quickly becoming the games players of the present day (in the States, that is). In fact, a report by the American publication *Computer & Software News* recently discovered that games are the number one way adults use their computers.



And if Britain is to follow the United States, as it so often does, then the prospect of Mr Wilmot-Black at Barclays Bank playing *The Duel: Test Drive II* on his home and office PC is not so ludicrous after all (although the moral implications of a bank manager playing *Blood Money* are a little dubious). And it was with this vision of future entertainment that Alan Miller and Bob Whitehead (two of the original founders of Activision) set up Accolade.



What's in a name?

But why be called Accolade? Well, Al and Bob picked up their dictionary and looked for the first word that suitably described their company: praise, public approval, award, honour... All of these nouns Miller and Whitehead wanted, on that cold December morning of 1984, as their company was conceived.

The two entrepreneurs couldn't have given their company a more appropriate name. Within the first year of operation (1986) Accolade released five products. The first that us limeys were privileged to get our peepers on was *Hardball!*, a sports simulation of America's favourite sport, baseball. And very successful it was too. The C64 version was well programmed and sold enough to convince Accolade to produce a Spectrum version (marketed by Advance). And so Accolade were launched in the UK.

A strange release

Their first distributors served them well; US Gold followed the release of *Hardball!* with *PSI-5 Trading Company* — a weird outerspace trading game. *PSI-5* received similar rave reviews, although a most reviewers felt it was difficult to get into. Accolade learned their lesson and adjusted their policy to accommodate simulations in a more prominent position. Ralph Giuffre, vice-president of marketing, explains: 'No-one denies that fact that computers can be intimidating, but if you put something on the computer people understand instantly the intimidation factor plummets... particularly with the new computer owner.'

Looking back, Accolade's release of *PSI-5* was strange to say the least. After all, Accolade are masters of the art of simulation, and it was a long time before they produced such an odd game again. They decided that simulations were what they did best: especially sports sims. Games like *Fight Night* and *Mean 18: Ultimate Golf* soon helped the company grow. From the five products released in 1986, they reaped the rewards of $5 million sales and secured distribution in more than 3000 outlets — no mean feat for a new

THING

privately-owned company.

In year two their revenue increased by 90%. Last year Accolade hit a high with five of their games featuring in the top ten IBM games of the year — sales snowballed their way to $16 million plus.

And, as their name suggests, Accolade soon started gaining a reputation for high-class games. *Hardball!* has picked up the American Software Publishers Association's Platinum Award (250,000 games sold), and *Mean 18*, *Test Drive* and *Ace Of Aces* have since gained Gold Awards for sales topping 100,000 units. This year Accolade has had five nominations for the SPA Excellence in Software Awards in July: *Bubble Ghost* (action/adventure), *Jack Nicklaus Greatest 18 Holes Of Major Championship Golf* (sports), *Fast Break* (sports), *Grand Prix Circuit* (simulation) and *Steel Thunder* (simulation). In fact, Accolade were so impressed by their own results in 1988 that they've now tagged the line 'The best in entertainment software' onto the bottom of their logo.

So far Accolade have accumulated 9% of the North American market as a whole, and claim to be the leaders in sports and simulations (which accounts for 60% of the USA market).

Grand prizes

But how have two ex-Atari games designers gone it alone and been so successful? Experience. 'Our company is made up of mature professionals with specific experience in the entertainment software industry,' says Accolade's president, Allan Epstein. 'The result is a high hit ratio. It's not hit or miss.' And once Accolade have hit that target they keep sending more bolts in the same direction. *Test Drive* was followed by *Grand Prix Circuit*, then *Test Drive II*, with extra car and scenery disks. *Mean 18* had six extra course disks, then there was *Mini-Putt*, and now follows *Jack Nicklaus* and additional course disks. Boats (*Power At Sea*), trains (*The Train: Escape From Normandy*), tanks (*Steel Thunder*) and even space rockets (*Apollo 18*); if it's real, Accolade will try to simulate it.

The company was founded by people who love computer games — what more motivation do you need than that. Al Miller reflects the whole feeling of his company: 'We're in the early stages of a revolution in which computers could, in the not too distant future, surpass television and movies as an entertainment medium... this is the place to be. You can do great stuff here.'

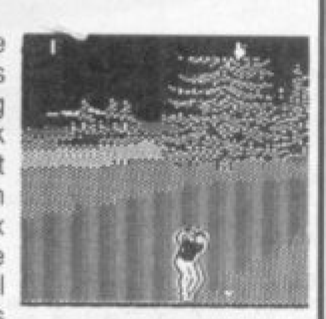
The company's enthusiasm for their market is borne through in the company's business strategy: be the best (not the biggest) in entertainment software, create outstanding products with broad appeal and good taste (*Strip Poker* clones are out of the question!), and have fun. 'If we can do all these things, we can't help but make money.'

The invasion begins

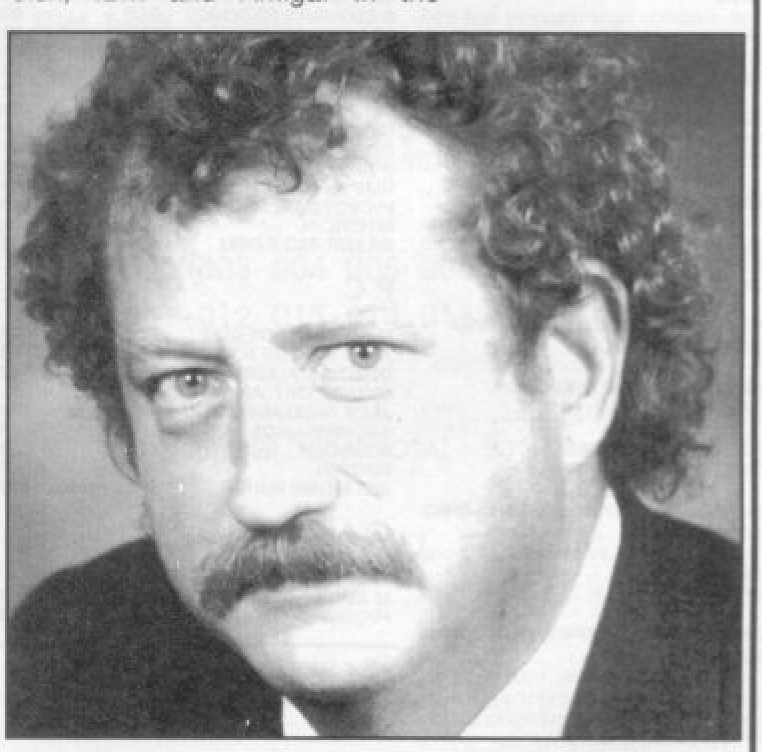
And making more money is exactly what they've got planned after they expand their operation to the shores of our motherland. As we speak, the American muscle of Accolade is moving in to market and distribute their own products in the UK. Previously Electronic Arts had handled Accolade's games — promoting them and getting them on the shelves — but Randy Thier, vice-president of international affairs, felt it was 'more desirable to go it alone' as the Accolade name had grown so big in the UK that they had to have a real presence in the country.

Thier has already appointed a handful of British staff to take care of the British operation, but, as yet, hasn't found quite the right person to head the company over here. 'There are plenty of people who are ideal for key positions in middle management — with a large amount of experience — but, as yet, I've not found quite the right person,' Thier commented. However, he's not worried; it seems as if Accolade's extension will run just as well under its hybrid arrangement.

Randy Thier is confident the UK operation will hit new heights in Accolade's overseas sales: Accolade are going for the UK in a real big way. Not only are they creating a base in the UK, Their says they'll also be translating the manuals into 'the Queen's English'. Thier believes it's 'the respectful thing to do'. He finds nothing more irritating than going into a bookstore, buying a book and taking it home to find out that the whole of it's written in English (sidewalk as pavement, icebox as fridge etc, and those strange spellings too!). Thier will reveal very little about Accolade's releases for the next six months: 'We've got some great product out at the moment, and I want to concentrate on that right now.' However, he revealed, they will be releasing a minimum of six games during the run up to Christmas.



Currently, product from Accolade features the terrific *The Duel: Test Drive II* on Accolade's major formats of C64 disk, IBM and Amiga. In the States, the MS-DOS machines (IBM, Tandy and compatibles) account for approximately 50% of the total market share for entertainment software. The other 50% is made up of software for C64, Apple Macintosh and Amiga — Accolade produce for all these formats. However, Thier confirms that Accolade will be producing some games on the other formats popular in Britain — Atari ST, Spectrum and Amstrad.



Looking for a British manager: Randall Thier in charge of Accolade's international affairs

Also out from Accolade at the moment, *Steel Thunder* — a tank sim which puts you in charge of America's four superior battle tanks. Having established themselves as leaders in sports sims, Thier stresses that Accolade would like to move into more general simulations. So more tank and ship sims seem likely.

But till the next Accolade product is unveiled, have fun and and grab the latest sim from Accolade to experience 'the real thing'.

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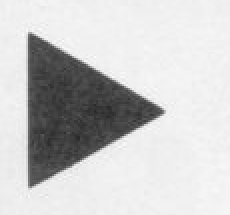
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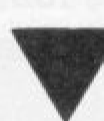
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When you've answered all TEN questions, complete the form with your name, address and phone number and send it to: GAMES MASTER JACKPOT GAME, THE GAMES MACHINE, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB. We'll put all the entries in a sack and the first entry pulled out at 9.30am on July 20 wins £1,000! It could be you!!!

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Information and tips!

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Grab the latest news on what's happening on the TGM News Update line **0898 555 088**.

Games players are also well catered for... Robin Candy is working overtime and getting all the hottest tips on the latest games. Need help, ring the TGM Tips Hotline **0898 555 087**

WATCH IT!

My name's Mel Croucher. I had a bit of a shock last week. It was in a Japanese girlie bar, and it involved some warm panda piss, Lou Reed and a subcode socket. Interested? Here's what happened...

It seems that when Japanese businessmen are not decimating British industry, playing golf or embalming emperors, they hang out in what are known as *karaoke* bars, and two or three establishments have recently opened in one of their colonies — London.

Well, last week I was doing a wee bit of business with two Japanese gentlemen from an outfit which had better remain nameless (JVC), and they invited me to 'relax' in this imported *karaoke* bar. We were greeted by a charming young lady dressed in something akin to goldfish skin, and served some warm panda piss by several other young ladies. Naturally, I had no wish to offend my hosts, so I 'relaxed', awaiting whatever it is that you await in such places.

And then it happened. One after the other, besuited, bespectacled, oriental executives climbed up onto a little stage, grabbed a hand mike and burst into song. And they sang the most miserable, corny ballads this side of Des O'Connor, accompanied by a giant television screen. The orchestra was in digital stereo, and the screen displayed scrolling lyrics and bizarre graphics. Within seconds, every face was either beaded in sweat or running with tears. If this is having a good time, I hope I never meet the Japanese having a lousy one.

Although this is a riveting vignette into the social life of the lesser-spotted Croucher, some of you may be wondering what it's got to do with TGM, and I will tell you now. There are over 100,000 *karaoke* audio-visual machines pumping out ghastly singalongs in Japan, and there are 15,000 song titles to choose from. The songs are held 18 at a time on standard-format standard-priced compact discs, and they contain a big surprise.

When I was invited up on that stage to make a total pranny of myself, I made my excuses by saying that I couldn't read the Japanese lyrics and besides, I'd rather sing along to Lou Reed (who can't sing either). A few minutes later, old Lou's current album came blasting out of the karaoke machine, and the lyrics came scrolling across that big screen in English. The lady in the fish skin then pressed a button, and the words flashed by in Spanish, French, German and Italian, in perfect sync to the music.

Forgetting memory

That's when the shock hit. I was watching an interactive CD, with software at £9.99, which not only works but is available now. The sweating folk from JVC call it CD-G, and I am kicking myself because I've known about it for six years, but failed to realise the implications.

When compact discs were developed by Philips and Sony, nearly all of the digital data was taken up by superb music and a sprinkling of error correction. The designers reckoned that when these silver five-inch discs replaced the black twelve-inch versions, there wouldn't be any space on the packaging for patronising sleeve notes and revolting photographs. So they left about three per cent of the digital data unused for informative notes and visuals. Then they promptly forgot about them.

Some manufacturers used these extra bits to display track identification, time elapse and sundry rubbish on their CD players, then they too promptly forgot about them. Others provided a subcode socket on the back of their machines just in case any bright spark thought up a use for them, but they too got phased out. Then, five years later, *karaoke* took off.

Slow but good

A compact disc with CD-G facilities is exactly the same as an ordinary CD, and can be played on virtually any CD machine, but those extra bits of subcode contain one hell of a lot of remarkable data, with up to 1,500 different images plus text of up to 15 different written languages. Picture quality is a rather primitive choice of 16 colours from a palette of 4,096 with a resolution of 288 by 192 pixels. The images will play on any TV standard, PAL, NTSC or Martian.

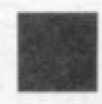
All this plus 74 minutes of near-perfect stereo sound, and the implications for computer entertainments must be obvious. Even with the appallingly slow search rate of between 2 and 10 seconds from one end of the disc to the other, this still beats most of today's graphics adventures. Screen formatting is limited, but as nobody has tackled it yet, I haven't got a clue as to how far it can be stretched.

What I do know is that you can have a rapid series of background video images, with superimposed scrolling sprites as well as simultaneous scrolling text vertically or horizontally. So in the past few days, I have rethought my entire attitude toward computerised CDs. Apart from entertainment, the educational and industrial applications are phenomenal, and for the first time in years I've gotten all hot and excited about these little silver discs. Mind you, that fish skin helped.

"The implications for computer entertainments must be obvious"

Well now, after some rapid checking, I can confirm the following information, remember where you read it first:

- JVC are planning to launch CD-G in Europe during 1989. I reckon that what will happen will be a low-key event based on their VS-G11 decoder box, with an RF output glued to it. I also reckon that nothing will happen in terms of public reaction until the much-heralded 'video-Walkman' has dominated next Christmas.
- Warner Bros are including CD-G data on many of their current titles already. Most other labels will follow during the next 24 months. By 1992 classical music will be displaying musical notation and librettos on screen, and pop music will offer a range of crummy graphics and unimaginative lyrics.
- At the moment a graphics decoder will set you back a hefty £250 (and only *karaoke* bars can afford 'em), but Hitachi are already marketing a composite CD/CD-V/CD-G machine in Japan, named the DA-V10, costing £350. Here in the UK, the Philips existing CDV-475 player has a little (unadvertised) socket on its backside, which is just waiting for some CD-G data. It costs £499. By 1992 most CD players will include a CD-G facility, and costs will be around £100 more than audio-only machines.
- The release of a standard CD-player to micro interface for the astonishing sum of TWO POUNDS FIFTY (!) in May of this year for the Commodore 64, Atari ST and Amiga is now being assessed by yours truly.
- As for Lou Reed, his record company reckon that CD-G decoders will be available here in July of this year. I'll believe that when I see it, but I can hardly wait to get my hands on one, bypass this *karaoke* nonsense and try out some computer entertainment ideas. Meanwhile, if you'll excuse me, pass me my panda piss Miss Wei-Wei, and hand me that microphone...



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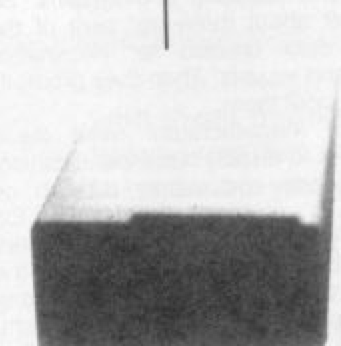


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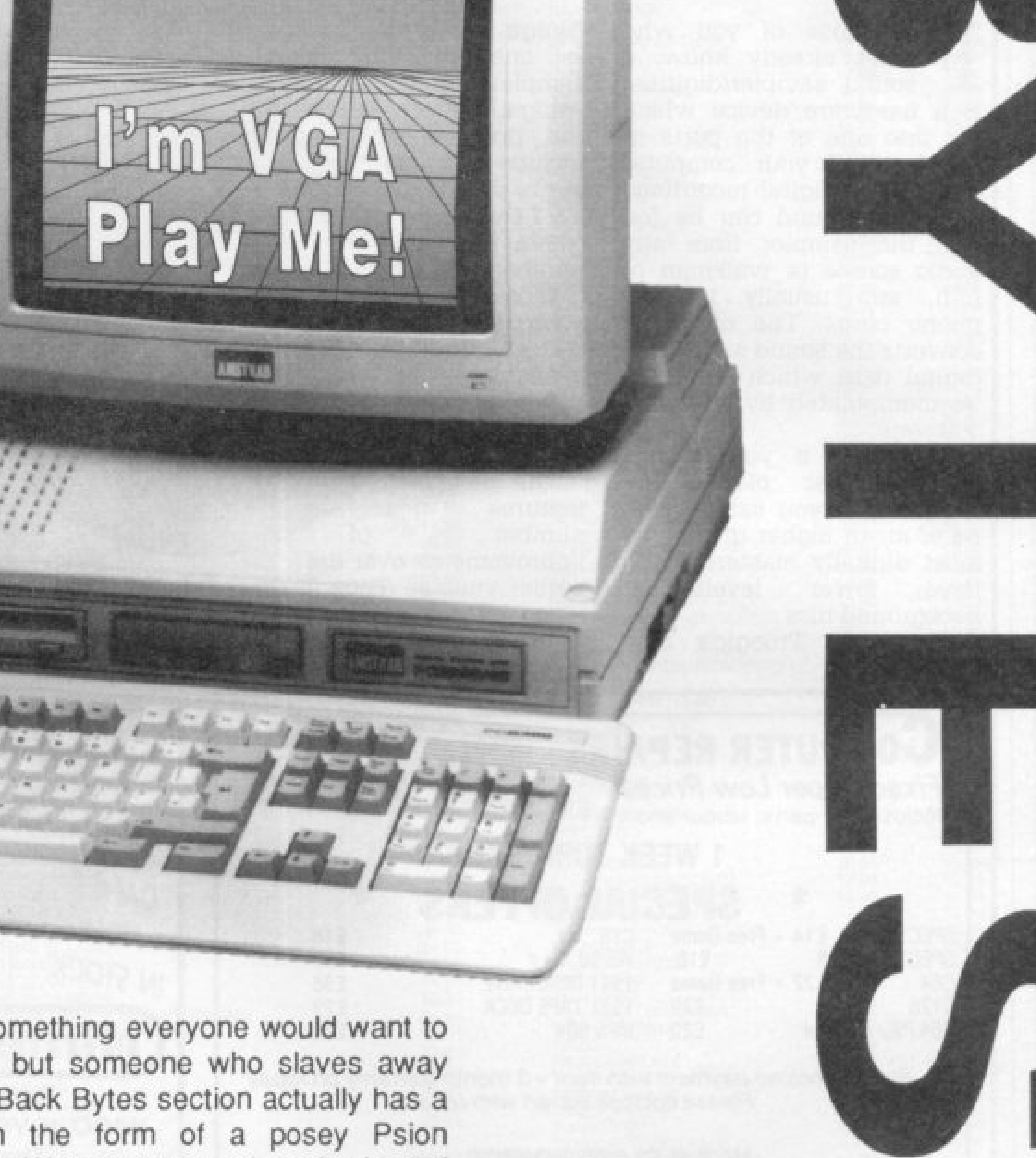
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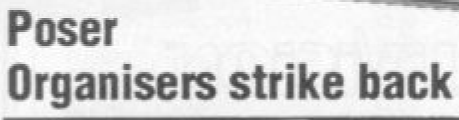
COMPUTING —
PCs are good for you



So says Jeffrey Davy in this month's Controversy, as he examines the pros and the cons of PC hardware and the software support in comparison with your average Amiga or Atari ST.
● Page 92

Doctor in the house

Zog's had loads of questions about the serious disease of modemdermatology, and donning his green surgical gown and sterile mask, he has some answers — it's not all that serious.
● Page83



Poser
Organisers strike back



It's not something everyone would want to admit to, but someone who slaves away over the Back Bytes section actually has a helper in the form of a posey Psion Organiser. We won't name them for fear of Yuppie flu reprisals, but Psion have released two more models. And that's not all the goodies in this month's Toolbox selection.
● Page 86

Sex games are really the best things out

And he can't imagine why there's suddenly so much fuss about a few harmless bawdy games — so claims one of our letter writers to Readerpage this month. Which links in quite neatly with our feature on Hewson's new game *Astaroth*...
● Page 94

WHAT'S INSIDE

INDUSTRY: WE WANT YOUR PRODUCT NEWS! CALL BACK BYTES
EDITORIAL Robin Candy ■ ADVERTISING Lee Watkins ■ 0584 5851

SAMPLERS ■

Keep this frequency clear

Last month Robin Candy introduced the topic of 16-bit sampling. This month Jason Sheldon lends an ear to Trilogic's very low-cost Amiga stereo sampler.

For those of you who don't already know, a sound sampler/digitiser is a hardware device which fits into one of the ports in the back of your computer and makes digital recordings of sound. Sound can be fed into the sampler from any audio source (a walkman or hi-fi, etc) usually through phono plugs. The computer converts the sound signal into digital data which can then be manipulated by sampling software.

Obviously, if you own a compact disc player, the sounds that you sample will be of much higher quality, as most digitally mastered CDs have lower levels of background hiss.

At £37.99 Trilogic's new Amiga stereo sound digitiser is one of the cheapest samplers available for the Amiga. Unfortunately the price doesn't include any sampling software (there are a number of cheap sampling packages available — try Public Domain libraries).

The sampler features a number of improvements over the earlier version. Though there is no LED sound input level indicator (which is essential for recording samples at a correct level — to low and the sample will be muffled; to high and the sample will sound distorted), the sampler seems to adjust itself to the volume of input you feed it. This is very helpful, and saves time having to fiddle about with a screwdriver to 'fine tune' the input level.

Obviously the main attraction of Trilogic's latest sampler is that it can sample in stereo. To take advantage of this you will need some sampling software which can handle stereo samples (Future Sound for example). Many songs use stereo to separate music and voice (Queen and the Beatles often did this) using a stereo sampler you can sample either left or right channels or both.

The accompanying manual is very good — if you don't already own any sampling software it offers help on writing your own routines detailing which pins of the sampler to read etc.

The sound quality of the Trilogic stereo sound digitiser is amazing. Considering it's an 8-bit sampler, which means there are only 256 possible values for any part of an almost infinitely variable waveform, it is one of the better samplers on the market. If you want to buy a sampler, be it for fun or professional music, then take a look at the Trilogic stereo sound digitiser.

■ Trilogic: *Unit 1, 253b New Works Road, Bradford, BD12 0QP.* Tel: 0274 691115.

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GUIDE TO REPAIR SERVICES

No matter how much you care for a computer, eventually something goes wrong.

And you can bet your life it'll happen after the guarantee has expired, so you can forget about sending it back to the manufacturers. In most cases, they won't want to know.

Before packing your computer off to a repair firm, check to see if your local computer dealer can recommend a local repair outfit.

Phone the company you choose and try to get a rough guide of the cost of the repair, how long it will take — and whether they'll give a warranty to do it again for free if the repair doesn't work.

Make sure that the quoted price includes parts, labour, VAT, and return postage.

When sending your computer by post, pack it carefully — preferably in the original box.

Always include a letter with your name, address, and telephone number and the effects of the fault.

Send the whole package by recorded delivery — just 24p on top of the stamp cost — and pay the extra cash for an advice-of-delivery slip (25p if you ask for it when you post the package, 65p if you leave it till later).

That way you know it's got there.

■ A1 Computer Services.
Unit 9, Paddock Mount Offices, Dawley, Telford, Shropshire TF4 3PR (0952) 502737.
COMPUTERS REPAIRED 'Virtually any computer' — including Spectrum, C64/128, BBC, 16-bits, C16, Vic20 and Plus 4.
PERIPHERALS REPAIRED Printers; also full disk-drive service for £25.
PRICES Mostly £25-£30, but C128 is £42.50.
WARRANTY Three months.

■ ACE Repairs.
Outways Farm, Pelynt, Looe, Cornwall, PL13 2NW (0503) 20282.
COMPUTERS REPAIRED Major makes except Atari ST.
PERIPHERALS REPAIRED Sinclair Interface 1 and Microdrive, Amstrad disk drives and printers and Commodore disk drives, printers and datacorders.
PRICES From £15 upwards depending on fault.
WARRANTY Six months.
INFORMATION Sinclair, Amstrad and Commodore spares and leads.

■ Ampower Video and Computers.
15A Alcester Rd, Studley, Warks, B80 7AJ (0527) 853374.
COMPUTERS REPAIRED All 8-bit and 16-bit machines.
PERIPHERALS Printers, monitors, disk drives etc.
PRICE Phone for information.
WARRANTY Three months.

■ BCL (Best Computers Ltd).
Galaxy Audio Visual, first floor, 230 Tottenham Court Road, London W1A 3AP (01) 631-0139 or 580-6640.
COMPUTERS REPAIRED All 8-bit and 16-bit including PCs.
PERIPHERALS REPAIRED All.
PRICES A typical small repair would cost £15-£20.
WARRANTY Six months.
INFORMATION Free estimates. Galaxy Audio Visual also sell micros.

■ Cambridge Micro Surgery.
Unit 4, 377B Cherry Hinton Road, Cambridge CB1 4DH (0223) 410234.
COMPUTERS REPAIRED Spectrum, C64, BBC, Amstrad, PCs.
PERIPHERALS REPAIRED Printers, monitors, disk drives etc.
PRICES Cheapest is 48K Spectrum at £18.95 plus cost of parts; others from £23.50.
WARRANTY Three months.
INFORMATION Will provide annual maintenance for business micros, on a contract basis.

■ The Computer Factory.
Analytic Engineering Ltd, Unit 18A, Grainger Road Industrial Estate, Southend SS2 5DD (0707) 618455.
COMPUTERS REPAIRED All major models except Atari.
PERIPHERALS REPAIRED Disk drives and printers.
PRICES £7-£40.
WARRANTY Three months.
INFORMATION Free estimates.

■ Electronic & Computer Services.
1000 Uxbridge Road, Hayes, Middlesex UB4 0RL (01) 573-2100.
COMPUTERS REPAIRED The full range of home computers — that includes all the well-known 8-bit and 16-bit machines.
PERIPHERALS REPAIRED Electronic & Computer Services will repair some peripherals, but write or phone for details in case yours isn't included.
PRICES According to the problem. Phone for a quote.
WARRANTY Write or phone for details. The warranty only covers the problem repaired, not the whole computer.
INFORMATION Turnaround varies, depending on the problem, from two days to a week.
Electronic & Computer Services also sell spare parts. Again, write or phone for details.

■ Hindley Electronics.
97 Market Street, Hindley, Wigan, Lancashire WN2 3AA (0942) 522743.
COMPUTERS REPAIRED Spectrum, C16/64, Vic20, CPC.
PERIPHERALS REPAIRED Some.
PRICES Set price for each machine, ranging from £17 (48K Spectrum) to £25. 1541 disk drives £32.50.
WARRANTY Three months.
INFORMATION Average two-day turnaround — well quicker than the average.

■ HS Computer Services.
Unit 2, The Orchard, Warton, Preston, Lancashire PR4 1BE (0772) 632686.
COMPUTERS REPAIRED All Spectrums.
PERIPHERALS REPAIRED Phone.
PRICES From £14.95.
WARRANTY Three months.

■ Ladbroke Computing International.
33 Ormskirk Road, Preston, Lancashire PR1 2QP (0772) 21474 or 27236.
COMPUTERS REPAIRED Mainly Atari.
PERIPHERALS REPAIRED Printers and disk drives.
PRICES According to machine — for example ST £34.50, XL/130 XE £23 (these prices include VAT).
WARRANTY Phone for information.

■ Microtech Computer Services.
216-219 Cotton Exchange Building, Old Hall Street, Liverpool L3 9LA (051) 236-2208.
COMPUTERS REPAIRED ST, Amiga, BBC, Amstrads.
PERIPHERALS REPAIRED Printers, monitors; also electric typewriters and other office equipment.
PRICES Start from £30 — call Mike Lopez at Microtech for a quote.
WARRANTY Three months.

■ MP Electronics.
Wendling, Dereham, Norfolk NR19 2LZ (0362) 87327.
COMPUTERS REPAIRED Spectrum, C64, BBC B, PCs — in fact all major makes except ST and Amiga.
PERIPHERALS REPAIRED Printers, plotters, monitors, disk drives etc.
PRICES All-inclusive prices for most machines — 48K Spectrum £15, 128K Spectrum, BBC B and C64 £27.50, PCs from £20-£100+. These rates cover all faults except those caused by other people's botched repairs!
WARRANTY Phone for information.
INFORMATION Free estimates. £20 repair and overhaul service for 48K Spectrums — MP Electronics replace sockets, keyboard membrane etc and will repair any faults that develop within six months of overhaul.

■ Ortec Micro Computers.
ORC GEC ITEC, GEC Switch Gear, Distribution Division, Higher Openshaw, Manchester M11 1FL (061) 301-2210.
COMPUTERS REPAIRED All home micros and PCs.
PERIPHERALS REPAIRED Printers, monitors and disk drives.
PRICES Depends on fault — phone for details.
WARRANTY Three months.

■ PM Engineering.
Unit 8, New Road, St Ives, Cambridgeshire PE17 4BG (0480) 61394.
COMPUTERS REPAIRED All home computers.
PERIPHERALS REPAIRED Printers, monitors and disk drives.
PRICES Phone. There's a set repair price for each computer, regardless of the fault and including all parts and labour.
WARRANTY Three months.

■ RA Electronics.
133 London Road South, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR33 0AX (0502) 566289.
COMPUTERS REPAIRED All

Attention repair firms !

If you would like a mention in the Back Bytes repair pages, please send the relevant details to Back Bytes, TGM, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB, including a phone number and the manager's name (for our files).

Spectrums.
PERIPHERALS REPAIRED Phone.

PRICES Spectrum 48K £14, Spectrum 128K £20.
INFORMATION RA Electronics also sell components.

■ **Roebuck Designs.**
Victory Works, Birds Hill, Letchworth, Hertfordshire SG6 1HX (0462) 480723 or 480929.
JOYSTICKS REPLACED Roebuck Designs run a clever joystick-replacement service which offers faster turnaround than a repair firm might.

Send in your broken joystick — any model — and they'll send back a second-hand but working stick of the same model. Later, they repair yours and pass it on to another customer.
PRICE £4.50 including return postage.

■ **Swindon ITEC.**
6 Oppenheimer Centre, Greenbridge Road, Swindon SN3 3JD (0793) 611808.
COMPUTERS REPAIRED Spectrum, C64/128, BBC B and Master series, CPC.
PERIPHERALS REPAIRED 5.25-inch disk drives, monitors, cassette-deck alignment.
PRICES Spectrum from £18, others from £25 (but small repairs may be cheaper).
WARRANTY Three months.
INFORMATION Most done within seven working days.

■ **Telegames.**
Kilby Bridge, Wigston, Leicestershire LE8 1TE (0533) 880445 or 813606.
CONSOLES REPAIRED Atari VCS2600, Colecovision, Intellivision, Sega.
PERIPHERALS REPAIRED Phone to ask.
PRICES VCS2600 £17.95, Colecovision £14.95, Intellivision £19.95, Sega £14.95.
WARRANTY 90 days.
INFORMATION Telegames promise to return the console to you just three days after they've received it. They're also the official UK repair centre for Sega and Colecovision.

■ **Verran Micro-Maintenance.**
Albany Park, Frimley Road, Camberley, Surrey GU15 2PL (0276) 66266.
COMPUTERS REPAIRED Spectrum, Amstrad, Commodore.
PERIPHERALS REPAIRED Printers, monitors.
PRICES Range from £19.95 for Spectrum to £95 for Amstrad PC1512.
INFORMATION Established six years. Approved by Amstrad.

■ **Video Vault.**
140 High Street West, Glossop, Derbyshire SK13 8HJ (04574) 66555.
COMPUTERS REPAIRED Most.
PERIPHERALS REPAIRED Phone.
PRICES From £19.95, according to machine.
WARRANTY Three months.
INFORMATION While-you-wait service in Manchester.

■ **VSE Technical Services.**
Unit 6, 8 Nursery Road, London SW9 8BP (01) 738-7707.
COMPUTERS REPAIRED All Spectrum, Amstrad, Atari and Commodore models.
PERIPHERALS REPAIRED Opus Discovery drive (partner Ian Vaudrey is official repairperson for the Sinclair Discovery Club).
PRICES Each model has a set price which covers all repairs except very major ones like keyboard or disk-drive replacement. Spectrums range from £12.90 to £17.90; C64 is £19.90, C128 £24.90; CPCs range from £21.90 to £24.90; all PCWs are £31.90.

Parts, labour, VAT and return postage within the UK are all included.
WARRANTY Four months.

■ **Wight Computing Home Micros.**
122 High Street, Ryde, Isle of Wight PO33 2SU (0983) 68978.
COMPUTERS REPAIRED Most.
PERIPHERALS REPAIRED Printers and monitors, but check first that the service is available for older models.
PRICES According to the problem.
WARRANTY 90 days.
INFORMATION Wight Computing will also check, clean etc computers which are not obviously faulty.

■ **WTS Electronics.**
Studio Master House, Chaul End Lane, Luton, Bedfordshire LU4 8EZ (0582) 491949.
COMPUTERS REPAIRED All home computers.
PERIPHERALS REPAIRED Printers, disk drives, modems etc.
PRICES 'Very competitive on all models.'
WARRANTY Three months.
INFORMATION WTS Electronics promise to complete the repair within one week from the day they receive the machine. Authorised Amstrad/Sinclair repair firm.

■ **Wynter Electronics.**
Unit 30F, Atlas Village, Oxgate Lane, Staples Corner, London NW2 7HU (01) 452-5660.
COMPUTERS REPAIRED Spectrum, Commodore, BBC, Atari, PCs.
PERIPHERALS REPAIRED Phone for details.
PRICES £18 upward, depending on machine.
WARRANTY Three months.
INFORMATION Repair done in one week.

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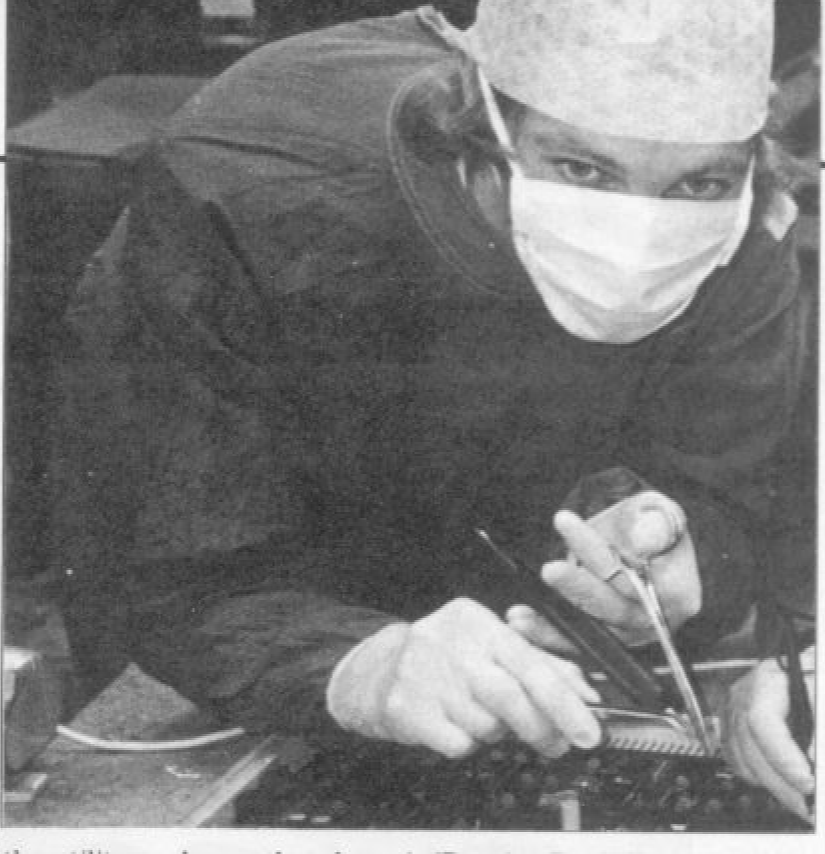
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COMMS ■

Doctor in the house



You might have got your 16-megabyte RISC micro, with 97 gigabyte hard disk, four (separate) operating systems and cocoa processor, but can you connect it up to other computers, Bulletin Boards and MUGs via your phone line? This month, Zog Welby MD (Doctor of Modemology) takes a look at some of your problems. So, without further ado, let us examine our first patient...

Doctor, doctor, I have lots of lights on the front of my modem. What are they all for, and why are they there?

Modems are fairly insecure creatures at the best of times, and so they often have things called status lights which show clever people (ie me, in this case) what the modem is trying to do. The first one to look for is the On or Power light. If it is not on, try plugging your modem in. Most modems require to be connected by a BT-type cable to the phone socket; by an RS-232 cable to your computer; and to a power supply, which itself plugs into the mains, although yours may be powered by the phone socket.

Duhh... what's a dumb modem, doc?

A dumb modem has probably only got a few lights to show you what's going on, and is so-called because you will have to attempt feats of bravery, such as ripping the top of the case, off just to do things like change the modem speed. Throw it away (or pay me consultancy rates to set it up for you), and get a Hayes-compatible modem.

Doctor, I have 232 RS cables. What was that again?

Dolt! Get an 'RS-232' cable, which is a cable with 25-pin D-type connectors at either end. For now, a cable with just pins 2 (Transmit data, or SD), 3 (Receive data, or RD) and 7 (Signal Ground, or Earth) connected up (at both ends, idiot!!) will do fine. Some loony computer manufacturers could never agree about who was sending what to whom, so you may find that you have to swap pins 2 and 3 over (not at both ends, you fool!) to get the setup to work. Clever modems will have lights marked 'TR' (Terminal Ready), 'RS' (Request to Send) and 'CS' (Clear to Send) lights, which will only come on if the 232 cable is present and when pins 2 and 3 are correctly connected. Plug it back in, use the screws or locking bar to keep it properly mated, switch everything back on again, and let's get on...

Why is Middlesex so famous for modems?

It isn't. Hayes is short for Hayes Microcomputer Products Inc, Norcross, Georgia, USA. The original guy took modems out of the dumb ages by giving them functions (such as autodialling, autoanswering, change of baud rate) which were controlled by software and thus could be set from the computer as needed. He did so well that by the time others started building clever modems too, they copied the protocol and claimed 'Hayes compatability' rather than try to impose their own standard. Praise de lawd...

Tell me straight doc, do I need software?

Well, you can use your computer as a 'dumb' terminal, which comes with many new computers anyway as part of the utility packages that they supply free. Unfortunately, they don't all work, so get an incredibly cheap disk from a reputable public domain chappy with something like Procomm or Intercomm or Uniterm. Then spend some time setting it all up. For now, forget about telephone directories and log files. Press your 'help' key or whatever gives you your menus, and set your communications to work at a nice sensible speed for now (300 baud transmit and 300 receive, or 300/300). Select 8 bits of data (rather than 7), NO parity (rather than odd, even, mark or space), 1 Stop Bit (rather than 2), and Full-duplex (rather than half). Most of the other settings are irrelevant for now and you can play with them later.

What's all this about Attention Codes?

Hayes-type modems obviously sit between your computer and the phone line, passing data from the computer to the line (and vice-versa, but that doesn't matter for now). The question you should all be asking is, how can the modem tell the difference between data which should be sent to the line and control signals telling it what to do? Well, one solution would have been to redesign the RS-232, but everyone was already using it, so that would have been tricky. Instead, Hayes made his modem recognise the letters 'AT' (short for attention, and only in capitals). Now that you have your software and cabling, try typing 'AT', followed by the return key. Your modem should respond with 'OK'on the screen, and beep at you, if it has a loudspeaker fitted. You should also have noticed the 'SD' (Send Data) and 'RD' (Receive Data) lights on the modem flashing as you typed each key.

Still nothing, doc..

Go through it all again. Check you have mains power to everything, and that the cables are fully in place. Press the'reset' button on the modem (if it has one). Twiddle confidently with various options of the comms program again until your modem talks to you. Disable any Xon/Xoff and CTS/RTS options at fist, because you want to get the thing working. Re-enable them later when you have more faith in things like pins 2 and 3 being the right way round. Try to get lights to flicker and 'AT' to work. Better now?

Yeeeehaar! A Miracle cure! Now what, doc?

Try switching to the correct modem speed you want, such as 1200/75, which means 1200 baud receive and 75 baud transmit. When you are accessing a computer or Bulletin Board, you will probably want to send very little data but receive lots, so this one is faster than 300/300. Unfortunately, some software does not support split speed working very well, so you may have to select 1200 Baud and select a separate 'limit transmit speed' option to 75 baud. This is only possible if your modem supports V23 as well as V21. If your modem is really clever, then it will a) cost more money, and b) support CCITT V22 and possibly even V22bis standards (1200/1200 and 2400/2400 baud full-duplex) of operation. Oh, and if you feel tempted to open a bottle of champers, invite me along to help drink it!

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INFORMATION DESK

So what's the difference between a sequencer and a scorewriter? Will we ever see Lords Of Midnight again? What's the best printer around? Our experts look into every problem you have. It's a jungle out there, and Information Desk is here to help you out.

Computing confusion

I am new to computing. I've bought an Amiga and wish to write music on it. However, I'm a little confused by some of the terms used. Can you tell me the difference between a sequencer and a scorewriter?
S Hague, London

A scorewriter allows you to enter note information in traditional music notation which is ideal if you've learned to read music. But many newcomers to music find the concept of crochets and quavers a bit difficult to understand.

A sequencer usually accepts note information through a MIDI device such as a synthesiser. You will need to buy a MIDI interface and cables to do this on the Amiga.

Once a music sequence has been played into the sequencer any timing errors can be corrected (this process is called quantization) and tracks of sequences can be pieced together to form a complete composition.

Music can also be entered in step time. Note information is entered into the computer usually in a series of numbers such as note, octave, start point, end point, note velocity etc. TGM is planning features on the latest and greatest scorewriters and sequencers in the near future. So you know where to come!

It's no use

I have recently been given an Apricot XI-PC, however, I don't know much about the machine. Do you know the addresses of any user groups or where I can get hold of hardware and software for my machine?
Stephen Bateman, Cheshire

After extensive enquiries we tracked down details on an Apricot User Group.
Apricot File: Unit 20, 11-17 Exmouth Place, Hackney, London E8 3RW. Tel: 01 254 2245.
Apricot UK: Tel: (021) 456 1324.

Lordy, lordy

An overseas reader whose letter got accidentally mislaid (sorry) wants to know if the classic game Lords Of Midnight is still available for the Spectrum.

Lords Of Midnight was originally marketed by Beyond Software. Beyond were bought by Telecom Soft who have since been bought by MicroProse. On contacting MicroProse, they were unsure about any rerelease plans for the Midnight games. In the meantime your best bet is to try specialist computer stores or classified ads columns. Fans of the Midnight games will also be pleased to know that the third game, Eye Of The Moon, *is still a possibility.*

Scan skeptic

I am thinking of buying a scanner for my 520 ST. The Geniscan GS4000 from Datel Electronics is the cheapest at £190. But as it is comparatively cheap it does make one wonder about the quality. What do you recommend?
MH Tang, Clapham

The Geniscan GS4000 boasts some impressive features for a sub-£200 image scanner. Images can be scanned at up to 400 dots per-inch and there are adjustable brightness and contrast controls. Saved images can be imported into many art utilities and DTP packages including Fleet Street *and* Neochrome. *Here at TGM we think that it represents excellent value for money, without compromise.*

I want a Virus

I've recently been playing Virus on a friend's Amiga, and think it's brilliant. Do you know if there are any plans to release it on the PC?
Sue Roberts, Shobdon

By the time you read this, a PC version of Virus *should be available in the shops, priced £24.95.*

Grading up

1) I own an Atari 520 STFM, and am considering adding an internal 512K upgrade. Would I be able to run all 1Mb software?
2) Would a Multiface ST still work normally?
Greig McArthur, Glasgow

1) Datel Electronics market an internal ST 1 Meg RAM upgrade kitfor £99.99. This makes the ST fully 1040 compatible. But it has to be fitted internally or it will invalidate your computer warranty.
2) Yes — you shouldn't experience any problems using a Multiface ST. Contact: Datel Electronics Ltd, Fenton Industrial Estate, Govan Road, Fenton, Stoke-on-Trent. Tel: (0782) 744707.

Cheap print

I am considering buying a printer for my Atari ST. However, I only have a budget of £270. Can you recommend a suitable printer in this price range.
J Davison, Leicester

There are a number of reasonable printers within your price range. Amstrad's DMP 3160 is perhaps the cheapest, retailing for £199. It prints at 40 characters per second (cps) in near letter quality (NLQ) mode and 160 cps in draft mode (one printer head pass).

There is also an Epson-compatible mode. Tandy's DMP-107 rolls in at £251 with a draft mode of 100 cps and NLQ mode running at 20 cps. Perhaps the best value for money low-budget printer is the popular Star LC-10. For £229 you get a 4K buffer (allowing a small degree of multitasking), 6 NLQ fonts and speeds of around 20 cps NLQ and 120 cps draft.

There is also a four-colour version available for £259. Watch out for a rundown of all the latest printers in a future edition of TGM.

Contact: Amstrad, Brentwood House, 169 Kings Road, Brentwood, Essex CM14 4EF. Tel: (0277) 230222.
Tandy, Tandy Centre, Leamore Lane, Walsall WS2 7PS. Tel: (0922) 710000.
Star Micronics, Craven House, 40 Uxbridge Road, Ealing, London W5 2BS. Tel: (01) 840 1800.



The Star LC10 colour printer. Watch out for next month's printer and wordprocessor special feature in Back Bytes

Muddled by MIDI? Perplexed by printers? Confused by consoles? We're here to help! Send all your computing queries to Information Desk, TGM, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB. Personal replies cannot be entered into (time is money...).

TOOLBOX ■ Products to keep you going

ATARI ST

Get STOSed!

The STOS family of games creation packages has grown. Three new packages have been introduced to improve the speed, graphics and sound of your creations.

The STOS compiler (£19.95) makes games run at twice their normal speed. It also reduces the size of a program, allowing more complex games to be constructed.



STOS Sprites 600 (£14.95) is a collection of fully-animated sprites which can be incorporated into your own STOS games. The sprites were designed by the same artist responsible for the graphics in STOS and include spaceships, wizards, aliens and an assortment of automobiles.

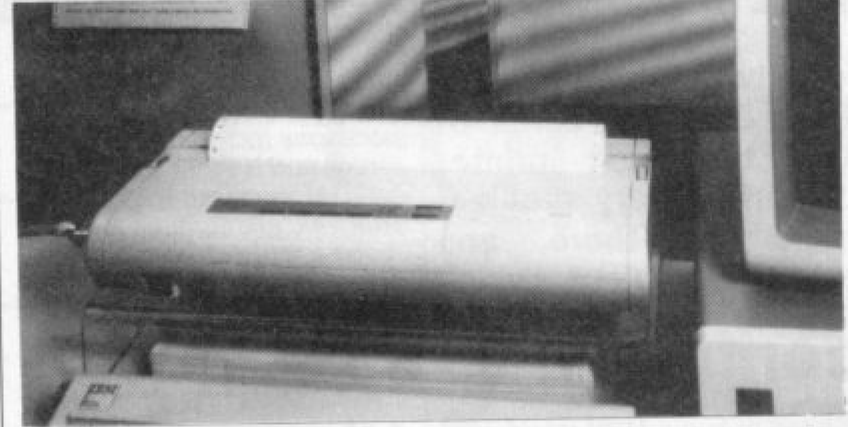
Finally STOS Maestro is a sampling package which allows sampled music and effects to be included in any STOS program. The software-only package (£24.95) includes over 30 effects and a drum machine program. Additional samples can be loaded or grabbed from commercial games. Maestro Plus (£69.95) also includes a sampling cartridge to create your own samples. The size of the sample is restricted only by available memory.

Mandarin Software: *Europa House, Adlington Park, Adlington, Macclesfield SK10 4NP.* Tel: (0625) 878888.

PRINTERS

Trueprint

Kodak for true print
Kodak, famed for their cameras rather than printers, have added two new printers to their Personal Printer Products range. The Kodak Diconix 300 (£499) and 300W (£599) ink-jet printers operate at a noise level of just 45db making them two of the quietest printers available.



Silent as a mouse: Kodak's Diconix 300W ink-jet printer

However, low noise is not the only advantage of the 300 and 300W. Both models feature IBM and Epson compatability and offer high quality output speeds of up to 310 characters per second (cps). There are a variety of fonts and graphics modes (up to 96x96 dpi in single-density mode). Both printers can handle a variety of paper sizes, with the 300W taking paper of up to 14.8 inches wide. For further information contact Kodak's Diconix official UK dealer.

Softsel: Softsel House, Syon Gate Way, Great West Road Estate, Brentford, Middlesex. Tel: (01) 568 8866.

JOYSTICKS

Maximum joy

De Gale Marketing have launched three new additions to their Quickjoy joystick range (priced from £8.95 to £19.95). All models feature finger and thumb fire buttons, autofire, eight-direction control and four suction cups. The top of the range Quickjoy V Superboard has six fire buttons, an autofire with variable speed control and a built-in digital LCD stopwatch. The entire Quickjoy range is directly compatible with most makes of home computer including C64/128, Amiga, MSX, Atari ST and Amstrad CPC.

De Gale Marketing Ltd: *81 Tottenham Court Road, London W1A 1EY.* Tel: (01) 637 5735.

FANZINES

BUGging off with s/w spree

Prior to the final issue of The Bug (see TGM018 for more details), Bug Publications International is to sell its entire software library and donate the 'majority' of the proceeds to charity. The collection consists of five years' worth of Spectrum, CPC, PC and Amiga software donated to *The Bug* for review purposes.

To ensure that you don't miss out on this very 'special' offer send an SAE to Bug Publications for a complete list of available software (games like *The Great Space Race* perhaps?).

Bug Publications: *28 Leaside Avenue, Muswell Hill, London N103BU.* Tel: (01) 883 1606.

PSION ORGANISER

Yuppies byte back

Back Bytes must admit that one member of the team does actually own a Psion Organiser —and he's been seen to use it. Psion have just released the second two models in their Organiser II range, the LZ (£149.95) and LZ64 (£189.95). The LZs have a four-line 80-column display (twice that of the CM and XP) making them much easier to use, and also have more functions and a larger memory (32K and 64K). All of the RAM-based software has been rejigged to make it simpler to use —with a terrific diary function that can show a whole week at a time, with small bars displaying when you have appointments and at what time of the day (four time bands are programmable).

Additions include a useful notepad, built-in password, stopwatch, eight different alarms of which there are three types (normal, siren, chimes), and world times and international dialling codes. The later is a good reference source and very clever. Just tellthe LZ where you are in the world (a choice of 400 cities in 150 countries) and it does the rest: works out the dialling code to other places and what their present times are.



The new Organiser also has a total cross-referencing option. Just give it an idea what you're looking for (any reference will do; phone number, surname etc...) and you're shown where the information is (in the diary, notepad, main file or even a program — the Organiser's completely programmable don't forget).

All in all the LZ and LZ64 (with extra RAM) are a vast improvement over the very handy originals (which are still available: CM at £79.95 and XP at £109.95). And —if you can stand the ribbing — well worth getting for the pose... errr, for the mass of information manipulation you can do with it. Psion: *Psion House, Harcourt Street, London W1H 1DT.* Tel: (01) 723 9408.

C64/128

Cassette blues solved

C64/128 owners suffering from cassette loading problems need suffer no longer. Palan Distribution have secured the marketing rights to the new Load-It Datasette (£39.99).

Load-It features an easy-access adjustable tape head, making the fine tuning of tape signals easy, and a signal strength meter to aid adjustment.

Palan Distribution: Tel: (01) 531 7171.

ATARI ST

Handy help from Stainton

Stainton Micros Ltd offer a trial or return service to disabled computer users. This is to reduce the risk of a disabled person making an unsuitable hardware or software purchase. However, the offer is limited to Atari ST hardware (no games packs), all software by Timeworks, Grafox, Precision and Sagesoft, also all Star and NEC printers. Potential customers should send the following details: full name and address, description of illness, doctor, national insurance and passport numbers. These details will remain confidential and will only be kept throughout the trial period.

Stainton Micros Ltd: *4 The Vale, South Ruislip, Middlesex HA4 0SG.*

AMIGA ● ATARI ST

Pretty as a picture

Photofile offer a photo-digitising service for Amiga and ST owners. Pictures can be digitised into almost any format including HAM, extra halfbrite and interlace modes on the Amiga and neochrome and degas formats on the ST. Pictures are usually processed and returned the same day that they are received by Photofile. Photos can be anything from passport size to A4 either colour (£1.50) or black and white (£1).

Photofile: *PO Box 196, Nottingham, NG2 4GQ.* Tel: (0602) 261498.

AMIGA

Flight of the condor

Condor Computing's new Integrator II is guaranteed to supercharge your Amiga. The all-in-one peripheral includes a 20Mb hard disk drive installed with autoboot and Kickstart 1.3, a 3.5-inch floppy drive, 2Mb fast RAM expansion board, slots for a 8088 Bridgeboard and a 5.25-inch floppy drive, surge protector and cooling fan. All for £746. Daval Electronics supply optional extras for the Integrator, including a 30 up to 60Mb hard disk upgrade and 2400 baud modem.

Condor Computing Ltd: 31 Palace Street, London SW1E 5HW. Tel: (01) 630 7343.

Daval Electronics: *The Old School House, Farcet, Peterborough PC7 3OB.* Tel: (0733) 24171.

COMMODORE 64

Slimline tonic

Owners of the old-style 'chunky' C64 can give their computer a facelift for just £19.95. That's the price of a new slimline C64c-style case from Financial Systems Software. The case is fully colour-coordinated to match the new style peripherals and is easy to fit.

FSSL: *18 High Street, Pershore, Worcestershire WR10 1BG.*
Tel: (0386) 553153.

SPECTRUM

Micro-drivin'

Sinclair's low cost storage microdrive system never really took off and microdrive owners have been left with little after sales support. EEC Ltd are now selling reconditioned microdrives with the relevant interface for £59.95 or individual microdrives for £14.95. They also stock ZX microdrive cartridges (which can be used with the QL) sold in bundles of ten for £18.

EEC LTD: *18-21 Misbourne House, Chiltern Hill, Chalfont St Peter, Bucks SL9 9UE.* Tel: (0753) 888866.

Competition

TIME WAITS FOR NO MAN...

Unless you're a TGM reader!

Ever been playing a game and wondered when the next alien wave will appear? Ever thought the timing on Daley Thompson's Olympic Challenge was a bit inaccurate? Well, worry no more. De Gale Marketing and the Back Bytes team have joined forces to help you fight back! The latest range of Quickjoy joysticks to come from the London-based stick manufacturer feature one special feature that no other such controller has ever had. The top-of-the-range Quickjoy V Superboard has a built-in LCD stopwatch! And through the vast resources of Back Bytes, TGM is offering one of these high-quality joysticks each to the TWO lucky readers who can answer the following question...



Who holds the world record for the men's 100m sprint (not at altitude or wind-assisted, clever clogs), and what is it?

Simple. Just pop your answer on the back of a postcard, along with your name and address, and send it to Superboard Joystick Competition, TGM, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB. Closing date is July 20, and the normal rules apply.

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The Games machine READER CLASSIFIEDS

WANTED

Wanted - unwanted Sega games. Will pay 10 pounds for 1 or 2 Mega cartridges & 6 pounds for the cards. Please write to Mr. S.S. Alg, 204 Merton Road, Wandsworth, London SW18 5SW. Thankyou.

ST contacts wanted from all over the world. Quick reply guaranteed. Write to Richard Burgwin, 8 Haston Road, Hadnall, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY4 3DG.

Wanted: Games for Amstrad CPC computer. Latest novelties. I would like to have some information about modem compatible systems. Please write to me if you are interested in selling games to: Soft Club, Celso Xaurador S/N, Calaf (Barcelona), 08280 Spain.

Amiga ST user receive a free copy of our bi-monthly newsletter including news, gossip, reviews and discount software. Send SAE to Centre Sixteen 825 Moorfield, Tower Hill, Kirkby L33 1DH.

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Continued on page 98

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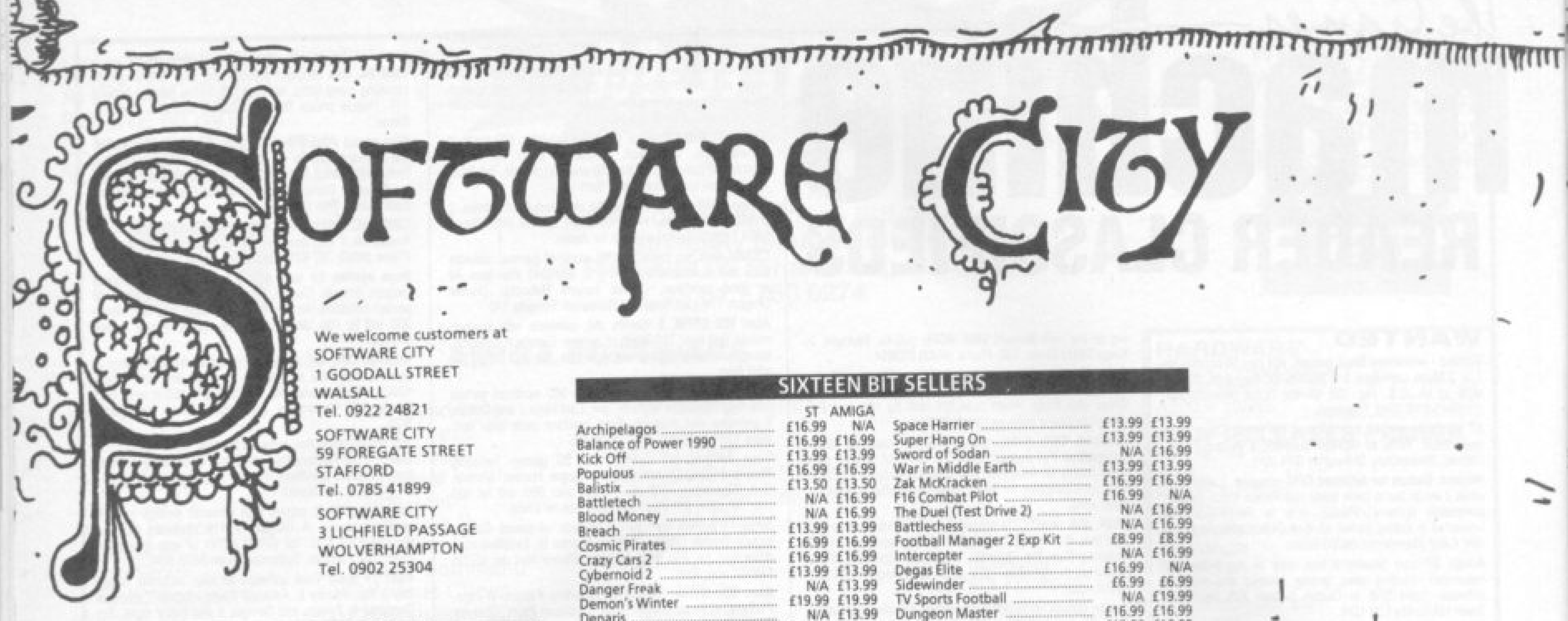
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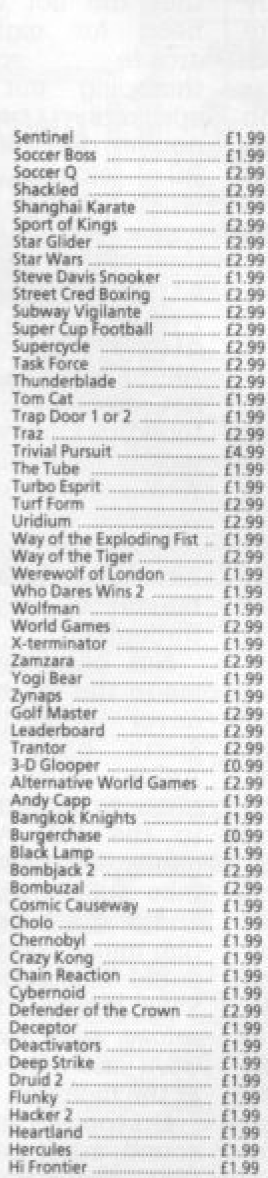


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CONTROVERSY

The games some people play

Is the PC a viable alternative for games players? Jeffrey Davy digs deep to find his graphics board.

Games players regard the PC like nuclear weapons — everyone knows they're there but nobody's silly enough to use them, are they? Times have changed. Since 1986, when Alan Sugar unleashed the cheap PC on an unsuspecting public, home PC ownership has spread faster than red wine on a cream carpet. From a boring item, used in boring offices by boring people in boring jobs, the PC invaded the lives of ordinary men and women and with that... games potential.

In early 1987, Electronic Arts made great strides by releasing American) games on the PC in the UK alongside the Amiga and the ST versions — often before the ST and Amiga versions. Of course, the PC versions had already been programmed and sold in the States, a country where the PC has been a major home games format for many years (it currently takes 50% of the US games market), so EA weren't exactly risking financial ruin by releasing them to us Brits.

Your average, bog-standard, CGA (Colour Graphics Adaptor — three colours, normally black, magenta and cyan, ugh!), PC compatible, like the Sinclair PC200 at £574, cannot offer you arcade graphics and the Royal Philharmonic in your living room, although it can offer compatibility with 90% of PC games software. Of course, as you dish out more and more dosh, you can create quite a system...

For graphics, EGA (Enhanced) offers 16 colours (standard on many machines such as the Amstrad PC1640, £804) which is pretty impressive, but you can also get VGA (Virtual) which can offer 256 colours and quality that would make Amiga owners quite worried. Unfortunately, the price of an Amstrad PC2086 with VGA as standard is £862.

Sound? Well the PC was designed to beep, and quite annoyingly at that, a bit like an early Spectrum. When IBM created the first PC, they did not forsee the need for eight-channel arcade soundtracks thumping out of hi-fi speakers and neither did the PC cloners when they created their PC compatibles. All is not lost, though, many companies, mostly American such as Accolade, have performed wonders with the PC's beeper-box and some, notably Titus and Loriciels, have put bursts of digitised sound through it.

Not only have the Yanks made the PC beep as it has never beeped before but Sierra have released the AdLib music card which gives an astounding 11 voices to the PC. All their new games have soundtracks that take full advantage of this and Sierra have even hired a film music composer to create audio masterworks. But... at $195 (about £125) it's a bit pricey, only available in the USA, and only used by Sierra at the moment.

On top of the graphics and sound, many people like more than one floppy drive — a hard disk even — or more memory (640K is increasingly the standard), or if they're speed freaks, something a bit faster than the 8MHz of the PC200. All this starts shunting up the price to quite staggering levels. If you thought that a top-of-the-range Amiga was expensive, an IBM Model 70 with 2Mb memory, running at 25MHz, with twin 3.5-inch 1.44Mb disk-drives, VGA, and a 120MB hard disk costs £7467 (although you'd need a 5.25-inch drive for most games), enough for 18 Amiga 500s.

Basically, it's not sensible to buy a PC just for games. In fact, doing so would probably be grounds for the reservation of a padded cell but... PCs don't just play games...

There are hundreds of pieces of non-games software for the PC and more appearing every week, from programming languages (you name it, there's a PC version available) to word processors, the range is massive. The owner of a PC is never likely to be stuck for serious software, unlike an Amiga or ST owner.

One thing that Amiga and ST owners have got (and that PC owners don't need!) is PC Emulators. Once loaded/inserted it opens up the opportunity to use a reasonable amount of the range mentioned above, albeit at an often slower speed — still no sign of an Amiga or ST emulator for the PC!

This means that 16-bit non-PC owners almost get the best of both worlds, the PC's range and their computer's graphics, sound and other features. This seems to leave the humble clone somewhat in the shade...

Or does it? A PC emulator can never quite capture the speed of a piece of software running on the PC and also has a number of hardware hiccups to get over that means it can never run ALL PC software. The PC is also an accepted worldwide standard and hugely popular in the USA, unlike the Amiga and ST. There are several great games that are simply not available for other computers at the moment and more that are only just being converted, such as MicroProse's *F-19 Stealth Fighter* — most new releases are now due to have a PC version too.

American software houses have long accepted that the PC is a format for games and business, and the same is now increasingly true in Britain. As a senior software PR person said: 'You'd be surprised how many business people have games software in their drawer,' as the case of City stockbrokers pirating Sierra's *Leisure Suit Larry* (and getting their reward through a virus) showed.

The PC is a great format, and has a (reasonably) long life ahead of it, so if you need a machine for business and a smattering of pleasure or if you already have one — try it out and prove to the software houses that the PC has games machine potential as much as the Amiga and ST — well almost!

■ **Jeffrey Davey was co-editor of The Bug magazine**

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READERPAGE

"When the release of Sam Fox Strip Poker came around, no-one said anything, so why all the fuss now...?"
writes Dominic Andoh, complaining about censorship and earning himself £50 worth of software into the bargain



Harmless fun

Dear TGM
Hollywood Poker Pro, Strip Poker II, Emmanuelle, Leisure Suit Larry, Leather Goddesses...

These are just some of the titles me and my friend, Daniel Emlin, have purchased between us. And they all have one thing in common: SEX!

I must admit that playing games of this ilk gives me more pleasure than a bash on *Operation Wolf, R-Type* and *RoboCop* — although these, too, are good.

On no account should games like *Strip Poker II* and *Leather Goddesses* be banned. Okay, so if you don't want young kids looking at them, then put them on the highest shelf, or even behind the counter, in the shop.

I must say that WH Smith went way over the top in banning some games because of their covers. I don't see them taking books written by James Hadley Chase off their shelves. Have you seen those covers? When the release of *Sam Fox Strip Poker* came around, no-one said anything, so why all the fuss now?

Games like *Emmanuelle* and the rest are just GOOD HARMLESS FUN. Having a good game of Strip Poker is not going to corrupt someone's mind for life, is it?

It's just plain and simple. If you don't like sexy games then don't buy them.
Dominic Andoh Jnr, London NW7



I'm sure that all the people who disapprove would certainly NOT buy the games. They just like complaining that they're there, and try to stop the rest of us from seeing them. Games with a strong sexual content have always created interest from the TGM review team.

However, things could be a lot worse for everyone. Currently, there's nothing in a computer game that you couldn't see (in the flesh) in a 15-rated movie. And don't forget that most computer pictures are of the quality you'd see kids drawing in most college artrooms (thankfully, computer games get most things in proportion). As yet, no games have been completely banned in Britain, but some have had their covers changed. Limiting the access of these games can only help in highlighting something that doesn't exist.

Exploitation in computer games is non-existent in the mainstream. Vixen wasn't exploitative, the woman was the heroine (and what a foxtress she was, smurp!). Although where strip poker games are concerned, staring at computer screens all night could bring a new meaning to the expression: you'll go blind.

Give 'em more dosh

Dear TGM
I've just picked up the May issue of The Games Machine. I write to compliment the people who review the games.

I have played some of the games they've reviewed. They were reviewed extremely accurately — the percentages are what I would have given them. Whatever you are paying them, it is not enough.
Steven McKee, West Bromich

Blimey, I hope the reviewing team aren't reading this! We've already given in to credits for the reviews. Whatever next? They'll be asking for little pictures of themselves soon!

Dawning of a new age

Dear TGM
With all these great consoles, the future of the 8-bit computers looks bleak. I think the Konix console will be in vogue, with its hydraulic chair, etc. And with all its power and relative cheapness, it could well be the demise of the old, reliable 8-bit. Not that I'm against 8-bit (I still love my C64), but how can they compete with the prices?

It would be sad to see them go, although if something new or innovative comes along (like a light gun, steering wheel, etc) then the future could be much better.

Anyway, cheerio, and keep up the good work.
Peter Sampson, Victoria, AUSTRALIA

PS: Are Konix going to release the Multi-System in Australia?

The Spectrum has just had the official Sinclair lightgun launched for it. But whether this will save the old rubber beast is a different matter. Anyhow, considering that the 8-bit computers have been around for five years or more now, we think they've done pretty well for themselves, don't you? The end's been predicted for more than two years, but still they survive and, some say, prosper...

As yet Konix have no plans to release the Multi-System in Australia. They still haven't launched it here yet!

MSX over-priced

Dear TGM
Recently I wrote to Samdale Computers asking for a list of MSX software, after reading their ad in your magazine. When the list arrived, I noticed games like *Vampire*, *Joe Blade* and *BMX Simulator* were for sale at £5.99, while their RRP is £1.99! I can't afford to pay 300% of the original price just because it's hard to find games for my machine.
Robin Ball, Devizes

We rang Code Masters who said that all their products were now£2.99, and Players confirmed that Joe Blade was only £1.99. We tried to contact Samdale Computers on

two different telephone numbers. The first informed us that the user's Vodafone was switched off (on every occasion), the second was an unhelpful answering machine (saying Samdale weren't in... during the day and night!).

Mispriced software is not new, however. Many times, major retailers have marked their prices incorrectly — but usually these are genuine mistakes (mixing up the different prices of formats for example). Of course, the only way to be sure of getting software at the recommended price is to go directly to the software publisher — most are very obliging.

Anon says, listen good

Dear TGM
8-bit users, listen good to what I am going to say. I know there are some good 8-bit computers, but the MSX has been invisible for some time. I mean, the graphics on this computer are unbelievable for an 8-bit machine — it is just too much to see. The Commodore 64's graphics are not up to this standard, the Amstrad's graphics are like blocks of ice and the Spectrum has just returned from the living dead. I mean, it is like a black and white monster, this computer needs to be shot.

Well, time is up for me and I just want to say to MSX users; keep up the pressure on the other 8-bits. And also thank you to TGM for featuring the MSX in your magazine.
Anonymous

Well, 8-bit users, we hope you listened good. This person obviously has something to say. Something about shooting blocks of ice at a Spectrum, we think. Anyway, time is certainly up for him! Regardless, the MSX may have some decent graphics, but the problem is most people are so impressed by the graphics that they forget that the programming of the games is pretty poor. And as for total machine compatibility, who needs it?

The amazing argument

Dear TGM
I have read the mag for several months now, and find it top quality. However, one thing that amazes us over here in Oz is the amount of, dare I say it, futile arguing between Amiga and Atari owners.

Let's face it, the only thing they should worry about is whether they can afford one or the other, and if they have enough security in their house so someone doesn't break in a steal it!

To me arguing about that is as mundane as arguing that XXXX is better than Fosters or Guinness. It doesn't matter, so long as you're happy with what you've got.

Finally, if anyone would like to further foreign relations in Australia, please write to:
Richard Carr, 25 Majestic Outlook, Seven Hill 4170, Brisbane, Queensland, AUSTRALIA

We sort of agree. The argument about which machine is better seems to have dogged the computer entertainment field since Sir Clive dropped the Spectrum on us and Commodore answered back with that browny-grey wedge of fudge that all 64 owners used to love. Still, that sort of competition is good news really — it keeps the fun alive if the letters colomns boring.

However, we must pick you up on one point: XXXX is quite a bit better than Fosters. And as for Guinness...

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Out of date

Dear TGM
I am a True Blue Aussie computer freak and always buy The Games Machine. But when I turn to the competition page the closing date is two months ago! Why is this so?
Mark Anderson, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Sorry, Mark, but there's not much we can do about that. It's all down to the time it takes to distribute copies abroad (which is largely out of our hands).

If the dates were any later, we'd never be up to date with our competitions. We suggest you take out a subscription, with The Games Machine which will arrive (by airmail) much earlier (though it costs a bit more) — and you'll have a guaranteed copy!

More engine power

Dear TGM
Granted the PC Engine is a minority machine but I think you should give it more coverage than you are at the moment. The June issue was supposed to be a Console Special — more like a Sega Megadrive Special! What does the PC Engine get? Little screenshots from three unknown games.

Where are the PC Engine reviews of *Space Harrier*? And what about *R-Type*? Where are the so-called brilliant games like *Legendary Axe, Dungeon Explorer, Tennis* and *Baseball*?

If you are going to say a machine is brilliant, then let's see what you are talking about, and not titchy screenshots.
David Charles, Leicester

Truth is we've only just got our hands on PAL TV and SCART monitor versions of the PC Engine for keeps (thanks Micro Media!). So now we'll be keeping our ear to the ground for PC Engine games and peripherals.

That said here come the excuses...

1 We did actually have five Engine games to review in the Special, but due to space only three could go in.

2 Galaga 88 *was given a glowing review (86%) in Issue 17, with a full-page screenshot!*

3 Legendary Axe *was the first ever PC Engine game, and is now completely out of stock, and the others are pretty old too —especially* R-Type *(we've reviewed* R-Type II *though!).*

News on the PC Engine... Sources inform us that the LCD screen for the Engine should come out this year. Although the screen will only work with NTSC versions of the Engine. All Engines are NTSC, unless they've been INTERNALLY altered to run on PAL — all Engines with plug-on PAL adaptors will work with the screen (so check before you buy).

Games to expect reviews on over the next few months include: Twin Cobra *(CD and ROM card),* Alien Crush, Pac-Land, Wataroo, Wardner, Thunder Blade, Out Run, Shinobi, Operation Wolf, Tiger Road, Pro Wrestling *and numerous golf games. TGM will get them as soon as they appear in Japan.*



■ UNCLE MEL'S TRIVIA QUIZ ■

1) Mitac have built a new factory in Taiwan. It produces PCs at the rate of one every: a) 14 minutes, b) 14 seconds, c) 14 raw fish.
2) Which Rainbow Arts title is set in the mythical world of Ghold?
3) In 1663, what computer did Samuel Pepys describe as 'able to add, subtract and multiply very well, but I propose not to trouble it yet with divisions.'
4) Explain the joke behind the name of the *2001* rogue computer HAL.
5) Spot the odd one out: *Close Encounters Of The Third Kind*, *E.T.*, *Star Trek — The Motion Picture* and *Blade Runner*
6) One man is responsible for bulletin board costs rising by a hefty 15%. Name him.
7) What restriction did Gerry Anderson place on Grandslam, when granting the *Thunderbirds* licence?
8) What did Alan Sugar lose on 20th April 1989? a) His car keys, b) His temper, c) 37 million quid.
9) What are Ankhs?
10) Spot the odd one out: Lambda BB, Pink Triangle, Miniet-4, The Connection, Corrupt Computing.
11) Domark's *Licence To Kill* is their fourth James Bond title. Name the other three.
12) BASIC stands for Bloody Awful Slow Idiots Computing. True or False?
13) Who is the author of the brilliant 'Communications And Networks best seller? a) Phil



DOminic & MARK: unlicensed to water ski at any price

Croucher, b) Mel Croucher, c) Wendy Big-Boy Croucher.
14) Anti-hacker adviser to Maggie Thatcher, Emma Nicholson MP, is working on a secret project with which of the following, a) Vlad the Impaler, b) Vlad the Inhaler, c) Mel Croucher.
15) True or false, the Atari Portfolio is the smallest PC compatible in the world.
16) Who are Kane, Ripley, Ash, Parker and Mother, and what was odd about Ash and Mother?
17) What's the difference between *Mike Read's Pop Quiz* and haemorrhoids?
18) Which computer game holds the record for the most versions released?

Answers

1) b) 14 seconds (scary ain't it...).
2) *Grand Monster Slam*.
3) His wife.
4) If you add one letter to each of HAL's components you get IBM.
5) *E.T.*, all the rest featured special effects by Douglas Trumbull.
6) Chancellor Nigel Lawson, who is slapping VAT on all charges.
7) No Violence!
8) All three.
9) Your spiritual power supply in Incentive's *Total Eclipse*.
10) Corrupt Computing, the rest aren't odd at all.
11) *A View To A Kill*, *The Living Daylights* and *Live And Let Die*.
12) False, BASIC stands for Beginners All-purpose Symbolic Instruction Code. On second thoughts, True!
13) Phil Croucher (£11.95, Sigma), but my latest book Namesakes is still available, so go and buy it now (£2.99, Sphere paperbacks).
14) Heh, heh, it's a secret!!
15) False. The Casio SF7500 is even smaller.
16) The crew of the Nostromo in Alien. Ash was an android, Mother was a computer.
17) None, they're both a pain in the arse.
18) Chess.

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COMPETITION RESULTS

TYPHOON THOMPSON'S KAYAK KOMP

DOMARK (Broderbund) Issue 18

The 3-metre Spirit 300 Kayak goes to winner **CB Lostum, Nottingham NG4 2LJ**.
Five runners-up get a pair of cycling shorts: Pierre Scotney, Bristol BS20 8BQ; R Sherriff, Lancaster LA1 5QD; Michael Dunn, Stourbridge DY8 3YD; J Froggatt, Sheffield S12 4ET; Richard Crompton,P ershore WR10 3LL.

SILKWORM IN THE SKY COMPETITION

SALES CURVE Issue 18

The winner receives a helicopter flight over London, visits programers Random Access, plays on the arcade machines, gets a copy of Silkworm and the next four Sales Curve titles as they're released. And he is **Ian S Ryder, Leeds LS11 7PB**.
Ten runners-up receive Silkworm and four other games when they're released: Dale Wilks, Cambridge CB1 3AQ; Pierre Scotney, Bristol BS20 8BQ; Michael de Ruiter, Holland; Craig Williams, Crewe CW2 8TD; D Gill, Buxton SK17 7BN; Andrew Bailey, Aldershot GU11 3XG; David MacLauchlan, Yeovil BA22 9LF; Mark Shaw, Cannock WS12 4SZ; Philip Baxter, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne NE20 9AL; Sean Glover, Peterborough PE6 0TJ.

STORMLORD HOT-LINE COMPETITION

Hewson Issue 18

50 winners receive a copy of Stormlord
Ian S Ryder, Leeds LS11 7PB; Paul Hayman, Dinas Powys CF6 4BY; Pierre Scotney, Bristol BS20 8BQ; Clive Fulcher, Peterborough PE6 0TW; Steven Martin, London N13 5DT; Danny O'Connor, Essex RM14 2RU; Nicholas Colledge, Nuneaton CV10 0EJ; Tony Wilkins, Bristol B54 1PN; D Gill, Buxton SK17 7BN; Gary Marr, Sheffield S5 8RP; Neil Bache, Stourbridge W.Mids; Derek Lee Marley, Newark NG22 9SJ; Alan Butterworth, Bolton BL6 7DW; Philip Peel, Sandiway CW8 2NF; T Vannozzi, Hampton TW12 2VQ; A Bogue, Stourport DY13 8QB; Michael McQuillan, Liverpool L33 8YA; Johnson Tang, Cardiff CF2 4NI; Richard Heasman, Buntingford SG9 9DP; Tamas Kucsma, London NW8 6RG; Paul Martin, Stourbridge DY7 6RT; Kevin Patton, Hemel Hempstead HP2 5TG; Mark Hanson, South Hylton SR4 0RT; Marc Driscoll, Worcester WR2 4AD; John Shearing, Godstone RH9 8NE; Anthony Underwood, Bolton BL6 6DS; Brett Patterson, Sheffield S2 5SB; Michael Hillerby, Aycliffe DL5 7AS; Leigh Loveday, Port Talbot SA12 6AL; Dustin Bird, Sawbridgeworth CM21 4DN; Geraint Evans, Barry CF6 8TT; Simon Price, Nelson BB9 0HF; Alan Tisch, Sheffield S17 3GT; Glen Davey, Essex SS6 9RW.

READERS SURVEY

ISSUE 17

10 winners to receive a TGM T-Shirt; James Cross, Leeds LS11 7NE. P Wakefield, London SW17 8BN; SJ Lee, Huntingdon PE17 1JP; Michael Jones, Birmingham B32 1NA; Robert Gallagher, Colchester; David Elson, Durham City DH1 4NU; Chris Amos, London SW17 7SD; Mark Branson, Croydon CR0 5DH; Claudio Lestan, Scarborough YO12 5SH; Allen Collicott, Herts SG9 9JJ.

10 Winners to receive a calendar:
R H Szpala, Staffs ST19 5HR; Mark Pratt, South Croydon CB2 0PN; Tony Cuthbertson, Leeds LS14 5AE; Mark Shaw, Cannock WS12 4SZ; Jason Walton, Guildford GU1 2LZ; Michael Ross, Prestwick KA9 1DQ; Edward McLeod, Stirlingshire PK3 0EB; Chris Erdis, Co Antrim N Ireland; J R Mason, Liverpool L23 0SH; Karli Watson, Harlow CM18 6QL.

10 winners to receive a Binder
Mark Lilly, Croydon CR0 0LA; A W Kenny, Crewe CW1 4HZ; Michael Scott, Co Down BT24 8EE; Mr O Hargreaves, Preston; Erol Ismael, London SE4 2DR; Graham Clarke, Preston PR1 9TQ; James Dobson, Sommerset TA9 3HR; Dagan Tilley, Whitley Bay NE26 2DZ; Russell Cook, Basildon SS16 6EZ; Matthew Alden, West Yorkshire LS23 6NL.

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■ Going Blind?

Visually distructive to users, Mel Croucher examines the harms and effects of using V.D.Us. TGM digs deep to find the REAL EFFECTS behind the speculation and the sensationalism.

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Features on all the latest games, all the latest news and pictures on forthcoming computer entertainment releases, more from our new adventure, RPG and strategy columnist, Paul Rigby, and big-prize competitions to boot — you know wher to come. . .

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Next month Back Bytes examines 16–bit word processors, and asks 'What's the difference between a hard return and a soft return — WYSIWYG always in vogue?'

We'll also be looking at the advancing capabilities of printers, and reveiwing the latest models. And don't get your lasers mixed up with your golf balls or they'll be real trouble!

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Continued from page 89

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